

K. ZARODOV

*The Political Economy
of Revolution*

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
AS SEEN FROM
THE HISTORICAL STANDPOINT



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by *Laura Beraha*

Designed by Vadim Gorin

К. Зарохов

**ПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ ЭКОНОМИЯ
РЕВОЛЮЦИИ**

На славянском языке

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The title of the present work should not be taken to indicate some new field of research or branch of political economics. The topic under discussion is rather the dialectical interaction of economy and politics in the socialist revolutionary transformation of society. In the author's opinion, political and economic factors, governing the class struggle in a revolutionary period, are so inextricably intertwined and interdependent that the conventional terminology—the political economy of revolution—though familiar to the reader in another context, is fully appropriate.

Discovered by the founders of Marxism, the principal aspects of the problem were thoroughly developed in Lenin's works, in his theory of socialist revolution. Revolutionary experience throughout the world has proven the scientific precision of fundamental Marxist-Leninist tenets. Life, however, does not stand still, and interaction between politics and economy in the revolutionary process demands constant reappraisal; theoretical conclusions must be reverified in practice. Today, as never before, the economic, material and social prerequisites are ripe for capitalism's replacement by socialism on a global scale. That the last exploitative order must be banished from the theatre of history is now, more than ever, an obvious imperative, what with capitalism's endemic contradictions and the grave crisis in its production relations. The laws of economy now function with unprecedented force as the laws of capitalism's downfall.

The final quarter of the twentieth century is also characterised by an upsurge in political activity among the popular masses; their independent, conscious participation in decision-making and actions affecting the destiny of society is immeasurably greater than that in any previous period. Revolutionary, democratic and liberation movements have taken on enormous power, authority and influence in the political arena. As a reforming force they are now stronger than ever.

Together, the above phenomena, with their unparalleled substance and scope, complicate any analysis of contemporary economy and politics interrelationships in the struggle for socialism. They must be approached with astute insight into their dialectical interaction, for simplistic, mechanical interpretations of the pertinent shifts in capitalist countries are misleading, erroneous and extremely dangerous for revolutionaries. In some cases, the confusion stems from a primitivistic understanding of economic determinism which either totally denies or drastically underrates the role of revolutionary politics to promote "self-destruction" or "socialist self-transformation" theories for capitalist economies. In others, economic laws and interests are ignored and the socialist transformation of society is seen as a matter of political principle only. Bourgeois and reformist ideologists have done much to spread such viewpoints. Unfortunately, they have influenced certain political circles connected with the revolutionary working-class movement.

Accordingly, communist and workers' parties throughout the world have begun to study the economy-politics interplay in revolutionary social transformations as a specific issue vital to both ideological supremacy and strategy and tactics improvement. These parties are expanding contacts to compare notes on this complex, important question. In January 1978, for example, leaders and scholars from 45 communist and workers' parties conducted a comprehensive and fruitful debate at the Prague International Scientific Conference on "The Dialectics of Economics and Politics During the Struggle for the Revolutionary Transformation of Society". It is singled out from a host of similar conferences because the author, a delegate himself, was inspired to write this book by the timely and interesting speeches made there.

Interacting economic and political factors in the tran-

sition from capitalism to socialism provide an inexhaustible wealth of material. The author has restricted his analysis of the dialectical interconnection between economy and politics to the period of revolutionary development immediately prior to and following the establishment of working-class power—the build-up to, accomplishment and the “second day” of revolution. True, in the history of a society this represents one brief moment, but it is a critical moment, when class relationships are strained to their utmost and clashing economic and political interests reach the exploding point.

Before proceeding to the specific issues involved, it is necessary to define the general theoretical premises to be used in this analysis. Accordingly, the first chapter will outline the basic features of a scientific, as opposed to subjectivistic or idealistic, approach to the relationship between economy and politics in revolution. Subsequent chapters will focus on the revolutionary transformation of property relations, the changing class nature of state power, the role played by democracy in the revolutionary transformation of society, and the impact of international factors, all considered from the viewpoint of the economy-politics relationship in the revolutionary process. It is the author's hope that the material presented in this book will reaffirm one fundamental absolute, namely that the most complex problems in the socialist remoulding of modern bourgeois society can only be resolved through reliance on the revolutionary theory of communism, through Marxism-Leninism, despite the changing face of world capitalism and the variety of national differences in its camp. As far as possible, recent developments in the contemporary revolutionary process and the rich economic and political experience of communist parties in the advanced capitalist countries have been taken into account. Thus, references to present-day programmes and other documents published by various communist parties, speeches and works by their leaders and prominent scholars, are frequent.

The historical discussions, especially those on the Great October Revolution, the first victorious socialist revolution, which opened a new era in the history of mankind, were inspired by the needs of, and discussions taking place in, today's revolutionary movement and, to a certain extent, by various fact-twisting attempts by the ideological opponents

of communism. Here, the author will demonstrate the historical validity of classical Marxist-Leninist tenets on the dialectics of economy and politics and point out the refinements introduced by the revolutionary struggle. Finally, their relevance to contemporary issues will be shown. In other words, the guiding methodological principle was drawn from Lenin, who advised analysts "not to forget the underlying historical connection, to examine every question from the standpoint of how the given phenomenon arose in history and what were the principal stages in its development, and, from the standpoint of its development, to examine what it has become today".¹

Of course, deducing laws from the study of history is by no means an argument for unconditional repetition of the past. It is common knowledge that revolutionaries have always confronted totally unique circumstances. Marxists-Leninists, therefore, do not accept any mechanical parallels between past and present struggles for socialism. They dismiss as groundless all suggestions that the revolutionary experience of one nation be taken as a "ready-made model" for another's blind imitation. At the same time, ignorance of the past, the inability to use the revolutionary weapon honed by previous generations and, particularly, repeating the mistakes of those who trod unmarked trails do not, in our opinion, befit a true revolutionary.

Certain controversial issues in today's working-class movement will be discussed from the author's personal viewpoint. It is useful to define the points of contention which separate varying schools of thought, especially if this promotes their eventual reconciliation.

Needless to say, the author has followed the spirit and requirements of the internationalist stance taken by the CPSU and formulated by L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet: "While greatly attentive to the creative work of our comrades in the communist family, we believe that only practical experience can be the criterion for judging whether one or another concept is right or wrong. But before practice passes its final verdict, it is possible and indeed necessary to evaluate these

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State", *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Vol. 29, Moscow, 1965, p. 473.

concepts in a comradely discussion, through comparing the viewpoints and experience of various Parties. It is obviously theory, practice and our common cause that will stand to gain."¹

¹ *For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe, Berlin, June 29-30, 1976*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1976, p. 24.

CHAPTER ONE:

REVOLUTIONARY IDEALS AND LAWS

In their theoretical works, the founders of Marxism transformed socialism from a Utopia into a science. This was their greatest service to history. The most important, most pervasive and, in the final analysis, the definitive feature of the present period is the socio-historical realisation of this science. Public opinion moves steadily closer to the ideals of socialism and works actively for their attainment. "Socialism, since it has become a science, demands that it be pursued as a science,"¹ declared Engels, and today his words have more up-to-the-minute relevance than ever before.

The scientific approach to socialism demands unswerving adherence, in theory and practice alike, to the objective laws of the establishment and structure of a socialist society. It excludes any concession whatsoever to subjectivistic efforts or postulates. With regard to the present analysis, therefore, the interaction between *economy and politics in revolution*² must be defined with precision; the

¹ Frederick Engels, "Preface to *The Peasant War in Germany*", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Progress Publishers, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1969, p. 170.

² Both of the key terms in this discussion, "economy" and "politics", are to be understood in their widest sense. The first will refer to (1) the sum total of a given society's economic operations, including production, exchange, distribution and consumption, (2) the organisational-structural and industrial-technological level of a given national economy and, most importantly, (3) the system of production or property relations. Following Lenin's definition, "politics" will be used primarily as "the

extent and nature of this interdependence must be shown to take shape as a totally objective process.

What are the potentialities and limitations in purely economic development? Or more to the point: can a capitalist economic system evolve into a socialist system without direct political intervention? What governs the need for, feasibility and extent of, political intervention in the economy during the revolutionary transformation of society? These are the central issues in contemporary discussions on how to achieve socialism, in debates between revolutionaries and reformists, between Communists-Leninists and their right-wing or "left-wing" opponents.

It is the author's intention to prove, via the most basic theoretical and methodological principles, that only Marxism-Leninism reveals the true essence of the economy-politics interrelationship in the transition from capitalism to socialism. Unlike rigid economic determinism or idealistic concepts of politics' omnipotence, only Marxism-Leninism stresses the dialectical nature of this interaction.

The Basic Propositions

The fundamental Marxist-Leninist tenets on the economy-politics interaction can be outlined as follows:

(1) Politics "is the most concentrated expression of economics",¹ the very root of a given society's economic interests and relationships. Though to a certain extent the political sphere functions independently, it has direct impact on the economy, particularly in times of social upheaval, when it either stands with the ruling classes to support the existing socio-economic order or sides with the exploited classes to hasten the downfall and subsequent radical transformation of economic relationships.

sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government" (V. I. Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1975, p. 422.) Needless to say, the concept also includes a given party's activities, its principles, directives, strategical and tactical issues.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky's Mistakes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, Moscow, 1965, p. 32. See also V. I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 83 and Idem, "Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Moscow, 1966, p. 316.

(2) Investigation into their economic interests reveals the concrete historical role played by various classes and social strata in the revolutionary process.

(3) The class struggle first arises in the economic field but "becomes real, consistent and developed only when it embraces the sphere of politics... takes in the most significant thing in politics—the organisation of state power".¹ Similarly, the political struggle, the struggle for power is meaningless when it becomes an end in itself, when it is not directed to the thorough reformation of economic relationships, in the class interests of the working people.

(4) The economic prerequisites are crucial to the revolutionary transformation of society for, as Lenin wrote, "no revolt can bring about socialism unless the economic conditions for socialism are ripe".² On the other hand, it is impossible to shift from capitalism to socialism on the exclusive basis of economic change, without direct impact on the system of political power. The old government "never, not even in a period of crisis, 'falls', if it is not toppled over".³

(5) In revolution and in laying the groundwork for a new society "politics must take precedence over economics".⁴ Only the conscious effort of the broad masses, led by the working class and its political vanguard, can transform the economic base of society.

This dialectic is no Communists' fantasy. It was deduced from reality and must be properly reflected in theory and applied in political strategy.

Bourgeois ideologists are forever attacking the Communists' Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution on the grounds of its "unsubstantiality". They claim that the objective laws of social development are "non-existent" and accuse Marxists-Leninists of deliberately disguising the "sterility" of their studies by constant reference to dialectics. According to many critics of Marxism, they hide behind the dia-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Liberal and Marxist Conceptions of the Class Struggle", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, Moscow, 1968, pp. 121-22.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, Moscow, 1974, p. 363.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Collapse of the Second International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Moscow, 1977, p. 214.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 83.

lectical method to skirt precise conclusions and evaluations by means of convenient "on-the-other-hand" loopholes. As a rule, such oversimplification is a blind for a smear campaign on the method itself, for attempted distortions of concrete issues, especially the Marxist-Leninist concept of the dialectical interaction between economy and politics.

The usual argument runs as follows. When dialectics, or the influence of economy on politics and vice versa, are introduced into a discussion, it is thrown open to so many indefinable, chance combinations and anomalous variations that it becomes too chaotic for prescriptive formulation. One example of this approach is to be found in Ernst Nolte's studies on fascism. A bourgeois historian and sociologist who has recently risen to fame in West Germany, Nolte sees the entire history of mankind as corroborating some indivisible unity of the economic and political spheres. "In all advanced cultures, right back to the dawn of the New European era," he writes, "this social interconnection has been neither purely political nor purely economic. It is rather an integral economic, political, ideological and aesthetic complex; even the poorest or most downtrodden cannot slip out from under it, nor can the richest or wisest ever hope to rise above it."¹ Nolte accordingly concludes that any attempt by left-wing "writers or students" to trace political events to economic causes is "an expression of will, as opposed to an act of the intellect".²

This pedantic, abstract concept of "unknowable" laws governing the interaction of economy and politics can lead to conclusions which are far from impartial in terms of vested class interests and positions. Nolte, for example, finds no grounds for seeking an economic factor in the form of "financial support rendered by certain capitalists" behind the "thoroughly emotional mass movement of National Socialism". Similarly, he reasons that the left forces' ideal of a society which will "satisfy every citizen's needs in equal measure" is an unnecessary, unattainable and even harmful utopian dream. It is totally unrealistic in that it places economic interests ahead of no less consequential political factors.³

¹ Ernst Nolte, "Ökonomie und Politik", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1. Oktober 1977.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The above bourgeois theory has been described at some length because it capsulises one of the principal ideological stances taken by capitalist apologists on the economy-politics interaction. They claim that its laws are unfathomable in order to justify the common-garden bourgeois pragmatism palmed off as "wisdom from the above" in the society it rules. As has been shown, this stance is most convenient for whitewashing the bourgeois monopolies responsible for the crimes of fascism. By the same token, it lends ideological support to those who would discredit the social ideals of the left.

From this typical capitalist viewpoint, socialism is the product of an "economic fallacy"; as such it cannot encompass all the political elements and motive forces in social development. There are, however, other very popular brands of bourgeois ideology which emphasise economic factors. They reduce politics to a mere rubber-stamp register for economic evolution towards the "post-industrial society", towards a "mixed economy" composed of private enterprise and a "socialised" sector.

Social-democratic and related doctrines tend to recognise the class contradictions endemic to capitalist society, as well as the need to eliminate them in the process of socialist transformation. In both the economic and political spheres, however, they point to class cooperation, rather than class struggle, as the path to socialism. Politics is utterly divorced from economics inasmuch as it is charged with safeguarding "general national interests and values" beyond the class conflicts engendered by the prevailing system of economic relations. On the other hand, politics is granted only limited rights to discrete interference in the economic sphere in order to promote its smoother functioning, supposedly a matter of concern to all classes. It can never venture further than cosmetic amendments to the economic *status quo*, radical change being beyond its domain.

On the whole, social-democrats believe that socialism can be achieved through preserving the *status quo* in both politics and the economy. Thus the governmental apparatus and for that matter all political bodies in a bourgeois society can work for socialism. In the meantime, economic evolution via nationalisation and increased worker participation in industrial management will eventually lead to "socialist transformation" of the entire economic system.

Accordingly, social-reformists deny the formative impact of economic relationships and interests on politics, and "prohibit" the reverse influence. This "mutual isolation" theory separating economics and politics has wide-ranging practical consequences which are entirely convenient to the bourgeoisie. For example, in his long-term scheme for West European progress, Günther Nenning, a prominent political analyst, associated with the Socialist Party of Austria, would assign political affairs to the social-democrats and economic matters, to the bourgeoisie, the capitalists.¹ Mario Soares, head of Portugal's Socialist Party, believes that the key objective in the Portuguese people's revolution is political democracy, not economic reform.² This typical social-democrat stance won over so eminent a champion of capital's interests as the President of France Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who announced he would "hold out his hand" to French socialists, since he could see no substantial difference between his own views and their doctrine of priority political-democratic development.³

In a word, as long as the social-reformists are prepared to align their "socialist" programmes to political-democratic development without touching the socio-economic foundations of bourgeois society, they are guaranteed the sympathy and support of the bourgeoisie.

In its widest sense, the economy-politics interrelationship is a crucial point in the strategy of the struggle for socialism. Should we rely on objective economic laws, the inevitable structural changes and reforms in the capitalist system? Or, on the assumption that only well-planned political struggle can topple the rule of capital and clear the way for socialist construction, should we concentrate on cultivating political activism?

The international social-democratic movement is divided on this issue. Bruno Kreisky, the Socialist Party leader in Austria, expects the sheer volume of reforms to add up some day to qualitative change and thus advocates spontaneous

¹ Cf. Günther Nenning, *Realisten oder Verräter? Die Zukunft der Sozialdemokratie*, Bertelmann, Munich, 1976.

² Cf. Mario Soares, *Portugal: quelle révolution? Entretiens avec Dominique Pouchin*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1976.

³ Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, *Démocratie française*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, Paris, 1976, p. 170.

us evolution from capitalism to socialism.¹ In his book, *L'abeille et l'architecte. Chronique* (The Bee and the Architect: A Chronicle), François Mitterrand, first secretary of the French Socialist Party, maintains that only step-by-step reform, which will "create new demands and radical changes", can lead to socialism. "For this very reason," he writes, "...socialism means action, not the goal."²

Throughout the twentieth century, reformists have constantly been embellishing such notions. They are touted as "genuine Marxist" concepts and backed up by arguments along the lines of the recent statement made by Willy Brandt, Chairman of the West German Social Democratic Party to the effect that Marx's "premises cleared the way for and founded the reformist route to socialism".³ Today's social-reformist ideologists are just as obstinate as the leaders of the Second International who preached similar views at the beginning of the century. Bettino Craxi, head of the Italian Socialist Party, draws on the authority of Karl Kautsky to declare: "Kautsky was always mindful of the fact that the guiding idea of the strategy described in *Das Kapital* was to wait until souls and things had matured for the transition to socialism."⁴ He then turns to Marx, who proved that "revolution was no longer spawned by the capricious will of a few doctrinaire spirits, but grew logically and inevitably out of the inner contradictions of the market system".⁵ From which Craxi concludes that revolution is a spontaneous process which needs no priming. Join a revolutionary party, not a party of revolutionaries, he advises today's working-class movement activists, indulging in the same high-flown verbal gymnastics as Kautsky before him. He recommends the old German Social Democrats as the model party.⁶

Whenever reformists try to pass off such hypotheses as serious theory, they are merely tacking a pseudo-ideological rationale onto their political practice. In contrast, Marx-

¹ Cf. Bruno Kreisky, *Aspekte des demokratischen Sozialismus*, List Verlag, Munich, 1974.

² François Mitterrand, *L'abeille et l'architecte. Chronique*, Paris, 1978, p. 266.

³ Willy Brandt, "Karl Marx: ein demokratischer Revolutionär", *Zukunft*, Heft 2, Februar 1978, p. 43.

⁴ *Socialist Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 4, July-August 1977, p. 87.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

ism-Leninism has established as scientific and historically verified fact that steady evolution cannot alter the fundamental class nature of any society. Radical change interrupts evolution; it calls for a "leap forward", a revolution. As Lenin put it: "Capitalism creates its own grave-digger, itself creates the elements of a new system, yet, at the same time, without a 'leap' these individual elements change nothing in the general state of affairs" ¹

Contrary to the "crumbling capitalist relations" theory once propagated by self-proclaimed revolutionaries, the capitalist system can and does restore itself. It was Lenin who exposed this fallacy, when he remarked: "It all depends on how far the proletariat succeeds in making these 'crumbling relations' . . . crumble altogether." ²

On this premise, the programmes and policies adopted by Marxist-Leninist parties stress that only the direct political struggle of the working class and all working people can bring society to the turning point which opens the door to socialism. It must fight until the bourgeoisie is ousted from government. As Brezhnev pointed out, all socialist revolutions conform to this immutable law:

"The question of power continues to be the main issue in a revolution. It is either the power of the working class, acting in alliance with all the working people, or the power of the bourgeoisie. There is no third possibility;

"transition to socialism is possible only if the working class and its allies, having gained real political power, use it to end the socio-economic domination of capitalist and other exploiters;

"socialism can be victorious only if the working class and its vanguard, the Communists, are able to inspire and unite the working people as a whole in the struggle to build the new society, to transform the economy and all social relations along socialist lines;

"socialism can consolidate its position only if the working people's power is capable of defending the revolution against any attacks by the class enemy (and such attacks are inevitable, both internal and, most of all, external)." ³

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Differences in the European Labour Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, Moscow, 1967, p. 348.

² *Leninsky sbornik* (Lenin's Miscellany), Vol. IX, p. 359.

³ L. I. Brezhnev, *Our Course: Peace and Socialism*, Moscow, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1978, p. 179.

Accordingly, Communists work towards shifts in the sphere of politics, in the political power balance which they consider vital. To this end, the revolutionary party of the working class requires continual reinforcement, for without a strong revolutionary party, acting as the political vanguard of all working people, socialist goals cannot be attained. The Austrian Communist Party, for example, declares in one of its policy documents: "Socialist development can be launched only if the proper approach is taken to socialist revolution, with a strong Communist Party and an ideologically and politically mature working class, steeled for battle, united from within and firmly allied to the other labouring strata."¹ Its counterpart in France writes: "In the struggle for a new society, the French people need a strong, enlightened, militant vanguard party. Such is the French Communist Party."² "For this movement to advance successfully," write the Irish Communists, "the prerequisite must be that in the vanguard of the struggle there is a Marxist-Leninist Party linked with the International Communist Movement."³

Such are the fundamental differences between the reformist and revolutionary standpoints. Superficially, it might seem that the first stresses economics over politics, while the second reverses the priorities. In insisting that politics comes first when society experiences revolutionary upheaval, and approaches socialist revolution, do Marxists-Leninists claim some sort of exclusive privilege for *their own* politics? No, they mean politics in general, political decisions and actions which, in critical pre-revolutionary and revolutionary periods, have a far more impact on society than any economic processes. Moreover, when politics become the focal point, a dramatic activist upsurge is observed in all walks of life.

It must also be noted that though reformists take a "passive expectation" stance on socialism, their party organisations are by no means idle. Indeed, the social-democrats

¹ *Der 22. Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Österreichs: 18. bis 20. Januar 1974*, Globus-Verlag, Vienna, 1974, p. 342.

² "22e. Congrès du Parti communiste français", *Cahiers du communisme*, février-mars 1976, p. 384.

³ *Ireland in Crisis: The Communist Answer. Documents of the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland Held in Dublin, March 1975*, New Books Publications, Dublin, 1975, p. 22.

and reformist groups of their ilk are clearly just as active today, with capitalism embroiled in a deep crisis and the working masses drawn to socialist ideals in unprecedented numbers, as were their political forefathers during revolutionary crises of the past. It is therefore wrong to assume that only Communists place politics above economy when revolutionary enthusiasm is on the upswing, that other parties are free to support or disregard this thesis as they choose. Their freedom is purely hypothetical. In fact, the objective laws governing the revolutionary process force them to concentrate primarily on political issues. Consequently, the Marxist-Leninist postulate, which subordinates economy to politics—be it revolutionary, counter-revolutionary or conciliatory—during the class struggle involved in the immediate transition from capitalism to socialism, is not a subjective communist fantasy, but an objective response to reality.

The economy-politics interaction in the revolutionary transformation of society requires, on the one hand, the political consideration of economic, class interests, and direct political action for radical economic change, on the other. In every key issue facing the contemporary revolutionary movement, one or the other aspect of this dialectic inevitably surfaces.

The Objective and the Subjective

When the revolutionary movement is on the upswing and class contradictions become more intense, one of the most clear-cut directions taken by bourgeois and reformist politics can be summed up in one word—anti-communism.

Monopoly capital has not only accorded the social-democrat reformists legal recognition, it accepts them as a political group necessary to bourgeois society. At the same time, the ruling classes and ruling circles in the capitalist countries have had to accept communist parties as a permanent and authoritative fixture on the political scene. Still, whenever circumstances permit, the authorities try to stamp out these parties. Upon the total failure of the "quarantine" policy aimed at isolating the communist parties, they turned to a steady, well-organised campaign of ideological persuasion directed against the Communists themselves. Many champions of the capitalist order now insist

on making this "vaccination" policy their primary weapon. This is precisely the concept behind and the terminology used in the American journal *Foreign Affairs*, considered a most prestigious publication in the West.¹

Proponents of this "ideological and political therapy" work on the assumption that the political tug-of-war between the bourgeois and social-democrat parties pose no threat to capitalism. In contrast, the balance of forces between social-democrats and Communists is seen to have critical consequences for the entire capitalist system. Such, for example, is the opinion of Jean-François Revel, a French bourgeois journalist and author of several well-known books on the left movement published in the 1970s. In the *Foreign Affairs* he writes: "The fundamental controversy in Europe is thus not a debate between the Right and the Left but between two Lefts. The question is which trend of European socialism—the Leninist or the social-democratic—will prevail."² Revel is confident that by becoming legal, West European Communists will be forced to "blend into social-democracy".³ The bourgeoisie and its social-democrat allies have pinned their hopes on engineering a reformist-oriented shift in the working-class movement by bringing its ideology closer to social-democracy and "immunising" its leading cadres against Marxism-Leninism and scientific communism. Arrigo Levi, an Italian bourgeois political analyst, proposes a typical plan of attack: persuading the followers of "Leninist communism" to undertake a "reappraisal of their traditional ideas".⁴ The concept is refined in another article, where Levi actually advocates renouncing "revolutionary Leninism" in favour of "essentially social-democratic" tactics.⁵ In the same vein, Eric Heffer, a prominent member of the British Labour Party, urges Communists to "return to concepts . . . which existed before the Russian October Revolution",⁶ in other words, to resume the reformist stance adopted by the Second International. Among the leaders of the Socialist International, Bruno

¹ *C.I. Foreign Affairs*, July 1977, p. 814.

² *Foreign Affairs*, January 1978, p. 200.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

⁴ *Survey*, Summer/Autumn 1976, p. 94.

⁵ *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1977, p. 28.

⁶ *The Times*, 7 November 1977.

Kreisky quite frankly hopes that if this were done, "a complete political creed would then disappear . . . , they [the Communists] would become social-democrats, but with slightly more revolutionary talk".¹

This anti-communist ideological pressure campaign places considerable emphasis on attempts to discredit the revolutionary principle of communist parties' strategy, to interpret it as nothing other than some "voluntaristic spirit" traced to the "excessive" brand of political enthusiasm which neglects economic realities. It is Leninist doctrines which drag the revolutionary working class down into the sin of "voluntarism"—or so, at any rate, claim their class enemies in a variety of inventions. A formidable body of arguments has been developed to back this blatantly politically-biassed theory. Basically, they endeavour to demonstrate that following Leninist precepts at present is tantamount to turning one's back on the cold facts of today's world, to substituting subjectivistic guidelines and irresponsible solutions for the objective, time-honoured tenets of the socialist struggle.

In the first place, Leninism is depicted as some sort of idealistic credo which grants unlimited freedom of political will to the revolutionary party. The West German Social Democrat weekly *Vorwärts*, for example, declares that Leninism embodies a self-evident break with Marxist doctrine, for the latter posits socialism as an inevitable product of the class struggle and historical development. The working-class movement requires no cadre party to inject socialism "from without".² Professor Peter Wiles of the University of London takes up the same refrain in asserting that "Lenin identified History with the proletarian vanguard, that is, with his own political party, that is, with a group of people proclaimed infallible".³ And we may once again cite Craxi who, like his many social-democrat confederates, maintains that "the Marxism of Lenin . . . was nothing else than a concentrate of voluntarism and extremism".⁴

A second and elaborately argued case is made for Leninism as a specifically Russian phenomenon. For example, the above-quoted article from *Vorwärts* would have readers be-

¹ *Socialist Affairs*, September/October 1977, p. 119.

² Cf. *Vorwärts*, 27. Januar 1977, p. 29.

³ *Survey*, Summer/Autumn 1976, p. 158.

⁴ *Socialist Affairs*, July/August 1977, p. 88.

lieve that Lenin was inspired by the Russian terrorist tradition, not Marxism.¹ At the same time it is implied that Leninists ignored Russia's economic backwardness, her "lack of preparation" for socialism. Julius Braunthal, a top-ranking social-reformist theoretician, vehemently promotes this line of reasoning, highly characteristic of bourgeois historiography in general. He finds no capitalist socio-economic relations in pre-revolutionary Russia and thus concludes that Marx's material conditions for a socialist victory were simply non-existent.² Furthermore, Lenin was "clearly aware" of the fact but "railroaded the revolution through" like a true "voluntarist", "Blanquist" and "Jacobin".³

Bourgeois analysts lay similar charges against the communist parties which, guided by Lenin's precepts, led national socialist revolutions. According to John Keep, a Canadian bourgeois specialist in Russian history, Lenin's 1917 revolutionary strategy affected East European Communists only in that it "bolstered . . . voluntarism".⁴

Such is the most up-to-date critical arsenal trained on Leninists and Communists. Only total ignorance of historical fact could persuade one of its originality, for Leninism, the Bolshevik Party and Leninist revolutionaries all over the world have faced the same accusations throughout the twentieth century. They can therefore be discarded from both the theoretical and the historical standpoints.

No sooner had Leninist theory and practice come into being than its opponents claimed it had "diverged from Marxist fundamentals". The tradition dates as far back as early 1905, when the well-known Menshevik⁵ A. Martynov declared that Lenin had "joined the 'subjectivistic school of sociology', reverting to pre-Marxist materialism and its co-

¹ Cf. *Vorwärts*, 27. January 1977, p. 29.

² Cf. J. Braunthal, "Karl Marx und die Gegenwart", *Die Zukunft*, Heft 9, Mai 1968, p. 2; *Die Neue Gesellschaft*, Januar 1974, p. 77.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Cf. J. Keep, *The Bolshevik Revolution: Prototype or Myth?—The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1975, p. 60.

⁵ *Menshevism*: a variety of international opportunism in the Russian social-democrat movement which first emerged in 1903, at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). The majority (in Russian *bolshinstvo*, hence the term

rollary—historical idealism".¹ Opportunists in both the Russian and the international working-class movements were to follow Martynov's example right the way up to 1917.

The Leninist-opportunist ideological confrontation reached a critical point after the February revolution, when the social perspectives of the Russian revolution became a most topical issue. The Bolsheviks adopted the strategy, laid down in concrete detail by Lenin, of transferring power to the working class and promoting socialist revolution. Once again, all their class and political opponents relied heavily on the "voluntarism" and "arbitrary subjectivism" arguments, accusing the Leninists of trying to conduct the revolution with "party forces" alone, an "elite" group and the like. Lenin and his followers were bombarded with charges to the effect that their revolutionary policy was utterly divorced from Russia's economic reality.

Plekhanov's response to Lenin's "April Theses" set the tone for the Menshevik press: "If, in a given country, capitalism has not yet evolved to the advanced level where it begins to obstruct the development of national productive forces, it is absurd to call on the urban and rural workers and the poorest strata of the peasantry to overthrow the system."²

The Menshevik formula was eagerly seized by prominent members of Russian right-wing parties. In the summer of 1917, an economic policy statement was drafted right in the bureaucratic heart of the Provisional Government. Written by Cadet³ V. Stepanov, then Acting Director of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and his Deputy A. Konovalov,

"Bolshevik") of the Congress delegates voted for Lenin's revolutionary programme and an organised party structure, while the minority (in Russian *men'shinstvo*, hence "Menshevik") rejected both points. On the eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Mensheviks openly joined the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

¹ A. Martynov, *Dve diktatury* (Two Dictatorships), Petrograd, 1918, pp. 9-10.

² *Yedinstvo* (Unity), 12 April 1917; quoted from G. V. Plekhanov, *God na rodine* (A Year at Home), Vol. 1, Paris, 1921, p. 28.

³ Cadets (the Constitutional-Democratic Party, or, officially the Party of Popular Freedom): the chief political organisation of the Russian counter-revolutionary, bourgeois-liberal monarchists. They claimed to represent general-national "supra-class" interests, categorically rejected revolutionary means, supported "peaceful", "constitutional" evolution and strove to "channel the revolutionary groundswell" into "regulated social reform".

factory owner and Progressist,¹ the paper read: "The Provisional Government hereby declares, without qualification, that socialist changes to the present economic order are precluded, both now and in the immediate post-war future. Socialism requires the firm basis of universal organisation which Russia lacks, the full development of productive forces which, in essence, Russia has yet to even approach." ² The "leading lights" of bourgeois economic thought, Tugan-Baranovsky, Bernatsky and Zagorsky, made an energetic contribution to this same line of reasoning. They came to the unanimous conclusion that "the socialist era has yet to dawn in Russia". ³ In a subsequent resumé of these views, Cadet chief P. Milyukov "criticised" Bolshevism on the grounds that Lenin had charted out some arbitrary "socialist coup in a country which had not yet progressed from pure subsistence farming to an industrial economy", ⁴ and led his party in an attempt to "introduce socialism by force, without the appropriate economic pre-conditions". ⁵

Thus, representatives of the bourgeoisie spoke practically the same language as the "revolutionary-democratic" reformists. Moreover, in order to defend their class interests, they zealously undertook such apparently anti-capitalist ideological tasks as clarifying the "genuine essence" of Marxism. Milyukov, for example, took pains to prove that had the Bolsheviks properly understood "genuine Marxism... the October Revolution might never have come to pass". ⁶ In his opinion, the chief flaw in Leninism lay in

¹ The *Progressists*, formed as a party in 1907, uniting the wealthy capitalists and the landowners turned bourgeois. Anticipating the February Revolution, they urged the bourgeoisie to make certain concessions to the working class in an attempt to avert socialist revolution.

² *Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii nakanune Velikoi Oktjabrskoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii. Dokumenty i materialy* (Russia's Economic Position on the Eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution: Documents and Relevant Papers), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1957, p. 226.

³ *Birzhevyie vedomosti* (Stock-Exchange Recorder), 20 April 1917; *Russkoe slovo* (The Russian Word), 3 May 1917; *Den* (The Day), 4 May 1917.

⁴ P. N. Milyukov, *Rossia na perelome. Bolsheviskiy period russkoi revoliutsii* (Russia at the Crossroads: The Bolshevik Period of the Russian Revolution), Vol. 1, Paris, 1927, p. 130.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

the tendency to put greater weight on "politics and revolutionary Blanquism than economy and the scientific approach to revolution".¹ By the latter, Milyukov meant the well-known Marxist tenet, though of course, as a bourgeois politician, he could use the term only in inverted commas. In fact, he found pre-Leninist Marxism just as unpalatable as Leninism proper. Nonetheless, he realised that it was crucial to his bourgeois political goals to contrapose the two, to create the impression that Lenin's concepts were "so very divergent from Marxism" as to constitute a substantial break.²

Contemporary attacks on the theory and practice of Marxist-Leninist parties make constant reference to the specific features of our day which supposedly embody "history's own rebuttal". The brief survey presented above contains enough direct quotes to convince the reader that the late twentieth-century opponents of Leninism merely reiterate the arguments used by their distant predecessors. The substance of this position shall now be examined.

Leninism stands accused of letting political subjectivism take precedence over objective economic realities. In its purely theoretical aspect, this contention requires a review of the Marxist-Leninist concept of the role played by subjective factors in the historical process as a whole and socialist revolution in particular.

Lenin's abundant contribution to the development of Marxist thought includes a profound and comprehensive elaboration of the latter problem. Not once did he so much as broach the subject of "revising" or "correcting" the axiomatic Marxist theses on the correlation of the material and the ideal, the objective and the subjective—a point his critics fail to mention. Lenin did reveal a new aspect of this interaction, namely the complex objective-subjective dialectic in the process of revolutionary transformation. He stressed that "Marxism differs from all other socialist theories in the remarkable way it combines complete scientific sobriety in the analysis of the objective state of affairs and the objective course of evolution with the most emphatic recognition of the importance of the revolutionary energy, revolutionary creative genius, and revolutionary initiative

¹ Ibid., p. 125.

² Ibid., p. 132.

of the masses—and also, of course, of individuals, groups, organisations, and parties that are able to discover and achieve contact with one or another class.”¹

In particular, Lenin's analysis of this dialectic demonstrates that the objective conditions for socialist revolution are not restricted to circumstances of an exclusively materialist, economic, or “basis” nature. Politics, he wrote, “have their own objective logic, irrespective of what persons or parties plan in advance”.²

In the objective category of phenomena independent of the will of various groups, parties and even classes, Lenin included the mood of the masses, their increasing political activity, etc. To be sure, these factors must be regarded as secondary and derivative inasmuch as they are materially rooted in the antagonisms inherent to the class structure and the contradictions of bourgeois economy. But by no means does this imply that they are to be classed as subjective, for they represent reality at its most objective, cold hard facts which cannot be ignored by the individuals, parties or classes who have chosen their own political course, voting “for” or “against” the revolution.

Objectivity, therefore, is not the exclusive prerogative of economy. Political and socio-psychological processes are to an enormous extent objective. The science of Marxism-Leninism clearly demonstrates that, on the whole, the dividing line between the objective and the subjective fluctuates widely in the course of revolutionary development. The maturation of the objective prerequisites for revolution largely determines the necessary subjective factors. The reverse tendency, of equal impact, can be defined as the materialisation or ‘objectivisation’ of erstwhile subjective phenomena, which rises as a function of the upsurge in mass socio-political activity. Every socialist revolution fought since October 1917 has provided graphic confirmation of the following bi-partite principle, put forward by Marx: “Theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses.”³

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Against Boycott”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, Moscow, 1962, p. 36.

² V. I. Lenin, “Concerning an Article Published in the Organ of the Bund”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, Moscow, 1977, p. 379.

³ Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law”, in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1975, p. 182.

As is clear from the above, "critics" have no grounds to interpret the Leninist emphasis on political versus economic considerations in the revolutionary struggle for socialism as contempt for objective reality and the theoretical basis for political "voluntarism".

To continue: does accentuating the political aspect, the objective laws and subjective factors concerned, mean that the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism minimises, and even temporarily disregards economic realities, developmental levels and structural features? This, as has been shown, is precisely the inference drawn by the opponents of Leninism and supported by their biased research into the history of the October Revolution. The Bolshevik strategy of 1917 is analysed in an attempt to pit Marxism against Leninism, viz.: since Lenin "rejected" Marx's concept of the pivotal significance of economy, his party accomplished a "non-Marxist" revolution.

To this very day, the opponents of the revolutionary working class find reason to believe that Leninist Communists use tactics just as "non-Marxist" as the Bolshevik decision to launch the October Revolution. Why? Because, in the author's opinion, they continue to exploit a primitivist, non-Marxist and, for that matter, patently anti-Marxist interpretation of Marx's doctrine on the primacy of economy over politics in social development.

What, in point of fact, is the picture of capitalist economy painted by those who assert that "Marxism proper" predicates socialism as the natural outcome of spontaneous economic evolution, independent of "external" political intervention? They point to the developmental level of the productive forces and the organisational, industrial and technical structure of the economy as a whole. The attendant social composition, skills and "cultural level" of the economically active population are also featured. Granted, the concept of economy encompasses all these elements, and each contributes to the material prerequisites for socialist revolution. But Marxism has never reduced the objective economic groundwork for socialism to a narrowly materialist concept. Ever since Marx explained that "capital is not a thing, but rather a definite social production relation, belonging to a definite historical formation of society, which is manifested in a thing and lends this thing a specific so-

cial character,"¹ scientific, truly Marxian political economics has focused on capitalism's fundamental production relations. For this reason, it concentrates on determining the aggravation level reached by the economic, class contradictions embedded in these relations.

When Lenin and the Bolshevik Party roused the working people to fight in the October Revolution, they did not shut their eyes to Russia's economic backwardness vis-à-vis the USA and many a West European country. This most certainly does not suggest that they assumed Russia lacked the economic prerequisites for socialist revolution. Lenin declared that "socialism is now gazing at us from all the windows of modern capitalism; socialism is outlined directly, *practically*, by every important measure that constitutes a forward step on the basis of this modern capitalism".² These famous words summarise his penetrating analysis of capitalist economy in its imperialist phase as objectively ripe for a socialist break-through. Viewed in this light, Russia's economy, however backward and structurally unique, exhibited all the features required in the absolute and practical transition to socialism.

The objective prerequisites for socialism extend much further than production levels, industrial output volumes (for which Russia ranked fifth in the world) or the technical-economic indices which form the sole base for the Menshevik argument that Russia was "economically immature for socialism" and for contemporary bourgeois and reformist interpretations of Marxism. They are primarily determined by the scope and intensity of contradictions in capitalist production relations at imperialist stage. Russia's overall economic backwardness did not mitigate, but rather aggravated, these socio-economic antagonisms, lending them that particularly intolerable, blatant character typical of monopoly capitalism, of imperialism.

Equally unfounded is the contention, propagated by modern bourgeois ideologists, that Leninist political strategy took Russia's economic backwardness into account only in so far as it helped topple the old regime. This brand of log-

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 814.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, Moscow, 1974, p. 383.

ic underlies current concepts of Leninism as a "doctrine suitable for underdeveloped societies only". Lenin himself, however, repeatedly and mercilessly attacked those "sad-sack" revolutionaries and Communists who stake their struggle for socialism on economic backwardness *per se*.

Obviously, if a given society is to be judged as ripe for socialist transformation exclusively or predominantly on its economy's technical-production and organisational-structure merits, then the question of the existence or absence of economic prerequisites for such a transition is rendered insoluble. Indeed, who can establish the precise production volume, the optimal balance between the industrial, agrarian and service industry sectors, between state-capitalist and private-capitalist property, which guarantees the economic conditions required for the transition to socialism? Limited to these parameters alone, the problem inevitably yields an arbitrary, voluntarist solution.

In reality, the objective economic prerequisites for socialism were manifest on a global, historical scale as soon as the capitalist formation entered its final, imperialist stage. Therefore, the principal criteria for assessing a particular society as economically prepared or unprepared for socialist transformation must be the nature and intensity of the antagonisms (class, political, national, etc.) which stem from capitalism's prime contradiction, that between labour and capital or between the social nature of production and the private form of appropriation of its output. The growing power of monopolies aggravates the situation all the more.

The Russia of 1917 was a veritable hothouse of social antagonisms, since extremely advanced (for the time) economic forms developed side by side with the most backward. Bourgeois and reformist historians never fail to emphasise that Russia's national economy afforded a very narrow scope for labour-capital class contradictions. Typically, they point to industry's relatively minor significance in the overall economic picture. The argument, however, obscures one indisputable fact: with industry as Russia's most dynamic economic sector, the big capitalists had become, in effect, the ruling class. Which meant that capitalism's fundamental contradiction between the social nature of production and the private form of appropriation was snowballing into the nerve centre of the entire economy, and the society as a whole. All the exploiting classes flocked to

monopoly capital. Conversely, all the oppressed and exploited classes, social strata and groups were drawn towards the proletariat. The social instincts and experience rapidly acquired in the revolutionary upsurges of 1905 and February 1917 helped them discover that their economic interests were intrinsically tied to those of the working class.

Thus, the basic features of Russian economic reality were not only part, but the very kingpin, of the Bolsheviks' revolutionary policy. And it is precisely this truly Marxist understanding of the economic conditions for socialist struggle that the "conciliators" and reformists lack. *They* were the dogmatists, not Lenin and his followers. When the fundamental class contradictions, when all social antagonisms had intensified to the point of no return, *they* resorted, as Lenin observed, to slavish imitation of the past.¹ The political remedies they tried to impose on Russia reflected their idealistic, starry-eyed visions of "nation-wide interests" but were scarcely in step with the march of events. "They all call themselves Marxists", to quote Lenin's comment on the Menshevik Sukhanov's Notes, "but their conception of Marxism is impossibly pedantic. They have completely failed to understand what is decisive in Marxism, namely, its revolutionary dialectics."²

This is not to suggest that their politics were divorced from economic considerations. On the contrary, it was economically determined from A to Z, rooted in the petty bourgeoisie's essentially contradictory position in the socio-economic system. Of SRs³ and Mensheviks and their political behaviour, during the months following the February revolution, Lenin wrote: "Viewed from a Marxist angle, the conciliatory' attitude of the Narodnik⁴ and Menshevik

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Moscow, 1976, p. 476.

² *Ibid.*

³ SRs (Socialist-Revolutionaries): Russia's most significant petty-bourgeois party, active from 1901 to 1922. During the Russian revolution, SR policy evolved from a petty-bourgeois revolutionary programme into cooperation with the bourgeoisie (after February 1917) and finally into virtual alliance with the bourgeois-landowner counter-revolution (after October 1917).

⁴ *Narodniks* (from the Russian *narod*, "the people"): intelligentsia of non-gentle birth (or *raznochintsy*) whose ideology and movement dominated the bourgeois-democratic phase of the Russian revolutionary struggle (1861-1895) and reflected peasant-democratic

leaders is a manifestation of petty-bourgeois indecision. The petty bourgeoisie is afraid to trust the workers, and is afraid to break with the capitalists."¹ Elsewhere he observed that "the petty bourgeoisie are in real life dependent upon the bourgeoisie for they live like masters and not like proletarians (from the point of view of their *place* in social production) and follow the bourgeoisie in their outlook".² Lenin, and the Bolsheviks after him, went right to the crux of the matter. In contrast, the conciliators were against turning the bourgeois-democratic into a socialist revolution. Their aim was to establish a bourgeois regime and postpone the socialist transition for several decades of peaceful development.

Thus, the October Revolution refutes all anti-Leninist speculation, past and present. History itself proves that the Bolsheviks' truly Marxist approach to the Russian economic situation was an important factor in the brilliant success of their revolutionary programme. Conversely, the reformists' active struggle against the socialist revolution, a policy which objectively also stemmed from Russian economic reality but was subjectively based on a misreading of the same, quite naturally suffered defeat.

In working out modern revolutionary strategy, communist and workers' parties in non-socialist countries concentrate on the general state of the capitalist economy, its current features and fundamental contradictions. One of the central conclusions drawn from this analysis concerns the Leninist tenet which posits imperialism as the final stage of capitalist development, when the antagonisms inherent in bourgeois society become critically acute and the material prerequisites for socialism are ripe. The twentieth-century

interests. They combined a radical bourgeois-democratic, anti-feudal programme with a Utopian-socialist philosophy and fought against both the remnants of feudalism and the first shoots of capitalist development. Once they had exhausted their revolutionary potential, the Narodniks suffered ideological defeat at the hands of the Marxists. With the dawn of the proletarian phase, the working class, led by the Marxist-Leninist party, moved into the forefront of the Russian revolutionary movement.—Ed.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Has Dual Power Disappeared?" *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, Moscow, 1964, p. 447.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 62.

evolution of world capitalism testifies to its axiomatic validity.

While communist parties take due account of the specific technical, industrial, organisational and structural features of a given national economy, they focus on the social contradictions generated by conflicting economic interests. As Marxists-Leninists in the developed capitalist countries point out, the contradiction between the advanced forces of production and the outdated system of production relations, between the enhanced economic socialisation of production and the private-capitalist mode of appropriation, is now especially pronounced in all spheres of economic, social, political and cultural life. "As soon as the existing production relations begin to block the use of productive forces for progressive purposes," reads the Programme of the Communist Party of Denmark, "the time has come for major social changes. Ours is just such a time."¹ The Greek Communists observe that "as the global capitalist crisis continues to peak, Greek capitalist and state-monopoly development comprises the further intensification of both the basic capital-labour contradiction and all its concomitant antagonisms. The deterioration is particularly provoked by the country's increasing dependence on foreign monopolies and the anti-popular policies pursued by the monopolistic oligarchy. Consequently, the socio-class struggle is on the rise in Greece."²

And finally, the latest Programme of the German Communist Party concludes: "The antagonism between the working people and major capitalists constitutes the principal conflict in West Germany's capitalist society. As the tension mounts, the attendant contradictions multiply and intensify."³

This, again, reveals the distinctive feature of the Marxist-Leninist approach to the politics-economy relationship. It demands that political strategy be determined on technical

¹ XXV *sjezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Danii*. Kopenhagen, 23-26 sentyabrya 1976 goda (The 25th Congress of the Communist Party of Denmark), Moscow, 1978, pp. 72-73.

² *Thèses du CC du PSG pour le 10^e Congrès*, Athènes, 1978, pp. 56-57.

³ "Programm der Deutschen Kommunistischen Partei", *Unsere Zeit*, 25. Oktober 1978, Dokumentation.

and economic parameters and, more importantly, by the class nature of production relations, with all intrinsic conflicts. On the whole, then, Marxists-Leninists', or revolutionary Communists' theory and practice has from the outset rigorously adhered to the central doctrines of Marxism. Accordingly, it reflects objective and fundamental socio-economic reality in its national and global aspects, and above all, production relations and elementary class interests.

The myth of Communists' "voluntarism" would not merit such detailed discussion and refutation were "defending" the Leninist revolutionaries our only aim. We must arrive at a more offensive conclusion: a Marxist-Leninist is by definition the staunch enemy of any and all subjective attitudes; there can be no more consistent an anti-voluntarist than a Communist, whose golden rule is the scientific approach to socialism.

Indeed, throughout the revolutionary working-class movement, from the early history of communist parties to their present ideological and political life, the struggle against voluntarism has been a dominant trend.

Nowadays, the ultra-radical breed of revolutionary, however minor and sporadic a phenomenon in the non-socialist world, is constantly in the public eye, thanks to his strident propaganda and acts of terrorism. In the past fifteen years, he has often played ■■ appreciable role. He left an indelible imprint on the May 1968 events in France. In Chile, he played straight into the hands of the counter-revolution. He bears a good deal of the responsibility for the Portuguese reactionary revival in the fall of 1975. All too often, his leftist terrorist cohorts in Italy and Spain fall directly in line with right extremists, neo-fascists.

For the bourgeoisie and the monopolies, the voluntarism embodied in the leftist movement is, in objective terms, a most profitable ideological position. A certain, albeit negligible, amount of insane extremism on the left political flank is perfectly acceptable and convenient to capital's interests. Not only does it help discredit the left movement as a whole, it provides ■ handy excuse for "tightening the screws", cutting down on democratic freedoms and encouraging police state tendencies within existing regimes. Significantly, leftist, ultra-radical groups all over the world now turn to Peking for support, since Maoism has become one

more source of inspiration in voluntarist ideology and politics.

History has shown that the voluntarist approach to the revolutionary struggle against the rule of capital and for socialism is not the exclusive property of rebels "on the left". Rather, the typical voluntarist preference for "what I want right now" as opposed to the painstaking study of "what must be" spawns ideological and political trends which should properly be classed as right-wing deviations from the revolutionary line.

In the author's opinion, it is altogether incorrect to link voluntarism to the ultra-radical revolutionaries alone. This would mean emphasising concrete ideological and political manifestations without a clear understanding of their social nature. And Marxism-Leninism long ago exposed the petty-bourgeois roots of voluntarism. His intermediate position between labour and capital makes the petty bourgeois the eternal victim of misconceptions on class contradictions and the class struggle. Some pin their hopes on an elite revolutionary sect to lead a high-pressure, violent rebellion capable of crushing capitalist despotism in a single blow. Others are inclined to think that the basic labour-capital antagonism may be resolved in the most painless way through assigning consistent priority attention to the interests which unite the opposing classes into a single society or nation over and against specifically class interests.

The first scenario places the "frenzied petty bourgeois" in centre stage, while the second gives the selfsame petty bourgeois a rosy vision of a class struggle with a happy ending and a minimum of personal discomfort. These two representatives of one and the same social milieu may well misunderstand and even despise each other, which only reaffirms that violent swings of opinion are the socio-psychological norm for this "intermediate" social stratum.

Of late, the social composition of the world revolutionary movement has been expanding on an unprecedented scale. It is therefore more vulnerable to petty-bourgeois attitudes of the voluntaristic variety. A good many of their advocates are by no means against revolutionary aims and ideals. On the contrary, as were, for example, the Russian Narodniks before them, they are prepared to give their utmost to the revolutionary struggle. Unfortunately, they are not willing to submit to the iron logic and objective laws of this stru-

ggle, but seek instead to join it on their own terms. And therein they betray themselves as voluntarists.

Voluntarism therefore poses a serious threat to today's revolutionary movement. The cost of voluntarist blunders runs high and payment is unfailingly exacted. In his analysis of the Chilean Revolution of 1970-1973 Luis Corvalán, Secretary General of the Communist Party of Chile, observes: "The specific circumstances governing the Chilean revolutionary process called for more than the Party's iron will to cope with the various crises. Revolutionary initiative and courage are of paramount and at times even vital importance, but only when properly adjusted to objective, concrete conditions. Otherwise, one runs the risk of succumbing to voluntarism, to wishful thinking."¹

In the final analysis, reduced to its theoretical essence, voluntarism represents a specific attitude taken to the objective laws of revolution. It is no less than the flat denial of these laws, the attempt to replace them with wishful thinking, arbitrary constructions or "models". In this sense, voluntarism is the blood brother of Utopianism.

Against a Return to Utopia

Millions of people in today's world are more and more convinced that the bonds of capitalist exploitation must be burst. Where capital still holds the reins of power, the broad masses of the working people take up an ever more resolute search for the path to socialism.

The magnetic force of scientific socialism and the example set by the socialist countries enhance the authority and influence of the international communist movement, attracting new recruits and consolidating the positions of the constituent parties. As well, socialism finds support among a great number of non-communist worker, farmer and petty-bourgeois activists. Moreover, social-democrats still proclaim socialism, or at least their version thereof, as their rallying cry. All manner of leftist groups use the call of socialist future to rationalise hot-headed politics. Finally,

¹ *Los 1000 días de revolución. Dirigentes del PC de Chile analizan los enseñanzas de la experiencia chilena*, Editorial Internacional, Paz y Socialismo, Prague, 1978, p. 164.

there is a growing tendency among the bourgeoisie and even ultra-reactionary forces to advertise themselves as "socialists too", in an attempt to eliminate the ideological barrier separating them from the masses.

Early in 1978, the American *Time* magazine described the contemporary status of the "political ideology of socialism" as follows: "Today, self proclaimed socialists of one variety or another rule 53 of the world's sovereign states, controlling 39 per cent of its territory and 42 per cent of its population Socialism is a flag of convenience that accommodates technocrats and market-minded economists, that allows fascist-type dictators or small-time Bonapartes to perpetuate themselves in power. It is politically chic to use the socialist label."¹

On the basis of these figures, *Time* concludes that socialism has become "the most pervasive political ideology—or slogan—of the 20th century."²

However questionable the calculations and the commentary adduced, the conclusion is on the whole correct. It pays tribute to an important phenomenon of our times. Nevertheless, it paints a one-sided picture which shows the consciousness of mankind slowly ridding itself of bourgeois attitudes, but fails to mention the class roots of this process, the fact that capitalism has become an obsolete social system. At the same time, a significant aspect has been obscured: the bourgeoisie has long been adept in the art of "socialist" defence, incorporating into its arsenal what the American sociologist S. M. Lipset terms the symbolic association of socialism and communism with the ideology of independence.³

Faced with a steady loss of popular support for anti-socialist criticism from the traditional private-property viewpoint, bourgeois and reformist ideologists now put the bulk of their efforts into persuading the masses that the "socialist ideal", "scientific socialism" and "socialist reality" are entirely disparate concepts. Granted, the terms are not identical. It is well known, for instance, that the social-

¹ *Time*, 13 March 1978, p. 12.

² *Ibid.*

³ S. M. Lipset, *Political Cleavages in 'Developed' and 'Emerging' Politics*, Cleavages, "Ideologies and Party Systems", Helsinki-Turku, 1964, p. 44.

ist ideal pre-dates scientific socialism. But there have been attempts to prove that the two are mutually exclusive, to turn socialism back from a science to Utopianism, to force its supporters empty-handed back to square one, so to speak. Similarly, "existing socialism" does not comprehend the socialist ideal *in toto*. Socialism, as Frederick Engels pointed out long ago, is not a frozen, immutable entity; rather "it should be conceived in a state of constant flux and change".¹ Any current socialist society represents but a certain preliminary step towards the ultimate goal of communism. What is more, the very process of attainment enriches and "concretises" the ideal. The no-holds-barred campaign to discredit existing socialism by means of its separation from the socialist ideal is aimed at depriving its advocates of their material bearings and the experience of the socialist countries which have forged ahead. In short, it is an effort to obscure the socialist goal as much as possible.

It is common knowledge that no Marxist-Leninist has ever excluded the possibility of developing the theory of socialism, for creativity and social ingenuity are embedded in the science itself. Lenin emphasised the seminal role of the visionary ahead of his time.² But by no means does this sanction attempts to divorce the socialist movement from reality, from the objective, historically confirmed, laws of economic and social development. In the political, as in any other field—such as the natural sciences, for example—to ignore objective laws is to risk dangerous repercussions indeed.

Summing up, those who presume to improve socialism actually intend to castrate its very essence. Curiously enough, the many pseudo-socialists inevitably resort to negative definition: whatever the hybrid they promote, be it "national", "democratic", "genuine", or "neo-socialism", the "political pluralism" or "historical continuity" variety, each spotlights its own secondary aspect, shifting the focus away from the fundamental—from defining the essence of production relations in the socialist society.

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in one volume, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1968, p. 690.

² Cf. V. I. Lenin. "What Is To Be Done?" *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 509-10.

It might be objected that these relations are subsumed, *ipso facto*, in the very concept of socialism, that the prefixes or epithets merely refine certain essential features of the political or ideological superstructure. It is no accident, however, that none of the above theories offers a clear-cut definition of socialism as a specific mode of production.

Equally untenable is the thesis that global evolution from capitalism to socialism is a multi-faceted, as opposed to unilinear, process, that it is necessary to "single out the dominant feature for the specific instance in the specific era". The "dominant feature" or the "specific instance" most often mentioned is democracy. Hence, apparently, socialism may vary from one instance to the next, according to its particular "dominant trait". But where is the "dominant trait" of socialism as a distinctive social order or mode of production?

The theories outlined above regard the revolutionary process, the struggle for socialism, not as the summation of historical laws beyond the power of individual will, but as the product of some political machine operating on pre-determined blueprints and production plans. Such was the classical Utopian socialists' approach, the inspiration behind all manner of short-lived phalansteries and communes which strove to put a preconceived ideal into practice.

From its very inception, scientific socialism has opposed the notion of the revolutionary struggle as the mere realisation of an ideal. It was categorically rejected, and even mocked, by Marx: "They [the workers] have no ideals to realise, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant."¹ Lenin insisted that the political vanguard of the proletariat grasp this truth. Just before the October Revolution, he stressed, over and again, that their task was "not the application of certain 'theories' (an illusion against which Marx always warned socialists), but implementation of the most extreme practical measures".²

Prominent revolutionaries in a number of countries often turned to this Leninist precept. Rosa Luxemburg, for exam-

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Civil War in France", *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 224.

² V. I. Lenin, "Letters from Afar", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, Moscow, 1964, p. 330.

ple, wrote in late 1918, that the proletarian revolution "is not the attempt to reshape the world according to the ideals of a desperate minority, but rather a cause for millions of working people called to turn historical necessity into reality."¹

For revolutionaries who understand that the socialist struggle must be waged on scientific, not Utopian, strategy, these theoretical tenets are eternal guideposts.

That the ideals of socialism are widely recognised, even among its most dyed-in-the-wool adversaries, that socialist goals and ways to achieve them are now discussed in a veritable deluge of print, is a sign of our times. But this phenomenon did not arise yesterday: it spans the entire history of the twentieth-century revolutionary movement. As early as 1916 Lenin noted: "'Socialism' in general, as an aim, as the opposite of capitalism (or imperialism) is accepted now not only by the Kautsky crowd and social-chauvinists, but by many bourgeois social politicians."² In each successive revolutionary crisis in class contradictions, the ideological struggle did not centre on support for socialist principles, whose open or direct opponents were few. Instead, the issue most heatedly debated was the choice of paths to the socialist future, itself a controversial concept.

History proves the point. It was the Bolshevik Party, the party of scientific socialism, which inspired the working people of Russia to carry through the October Revolution. Still, among their opponents were those who also held socialist views. The Menshevik Social-Democrats advertised unmistakably socialist political goals. The Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs) propounded their own version of socialism and for a while, in between the February and October revolutions, were the numerically strongest party in Russia. Close to the SR line stood the Popular Socialists,³ whose very name symbolised their intention to rebuild society on their own, quasi-socialist lines.

¹ Rosa Luxemburg, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 4, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1974, p. 445.

² V. I. Lenin, "Principles Involved in the War Issue", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 153-54.

³ Popular Socialists (the Popular Socialist Labour Party): members of a Russian petty-bourgeois party which in 1908 split off from the SR right wing and, in the summer of 1917, merged with another petty-bourgeois political organisation of the Trudoviks. Representing the interests of the well-to-do peasantry (the *kulaks*),

All these parties counted themselves on the left, in the "revolutionary-democratic" camp. Even the Cadets, the right wing's leading political force, toyed with socialist ideas. Bourgeois in composition and spirit, bourgeois according to all the criteria for judging the class nature of a given political party, the Cadets were nonetheless inclined to recognise the "potential ethical ideal" of socialism, after the February Revolution. For example, one of their members, a certain Izgoyev, wrote: "The popular freedom party does not deny socialism as the ideal sought by mankind, the ultimate goal to be attained . . . if the free voice of reason and conscience is obeyed."¹ In the summer of 1917, the Cadets even joined other bourgeois activists to form the Union for Evolutionary Socialism. On the eve of the October Revolution, therefore, virtually every major contender in the Russian class, political struggle (excluding the monarchists and reactionaries) paid at least lipservice to socialism as their ultimate objective.

In one form or another, with one or another national shading, this specific feature of the twentieth-century socio-political climate has dominated the pre-revolutionary mood in other countries as well, wherever the question of the future structure of society crops up in the course of the class and democratic struggle. In the Czechoslovakia of September 1945, for example, the Communists, Social-Democrats and National Socialists—the three parties who proclaimed a socialist platform—joined forces to form the core of the National Front. Their over 70 per cent aggregate majority in the municipal and district national committees of Bohemia and Moravia testifies to their widespread influence among the masses. To be sure, each party had its own concept of socialism: the Communists following Marxist-Leninist precepts; the Social-Democrats inclining, despite some internal friction, to reformism; and the National Socialists, as befits an essentially bourgeois and petty-bourgeois group, maintaining a classless approach to socialism. Thomas Masaryk, the first President of bourgeois Czechoslovakia, summed up the last viewpoint in his

the Popular Socialists supported the bourgeois Provisional Government and, upon the October Revolution launched an open struggle against the Bolsheviks.

¹ A. S. Izgoyev, *Nashi politicheskie partii* (Our Political Parties), Petrograd, 1917, pp. 39-40.

oft-quoted definition of socialism as the fruit, still far from ripe, of "the revolution of heart and mind".¹ Once again, for all their discrepancies, every major political force, including those who had nothing to do with socialism but were desperate to retain some influence among the masses, instinctively drawn to the socialist model, eagerly proclaimed their support for socialism.

Romania is another case in point. When the fascist Antonescu regime was toppled, four parties moved into the political forefront: the Communists, the Social-Democrats, the National Liberals and the National Tsaranists. The latter two were "historical" parties representing the interests of the bourgeoisie, land-owners, and the rich peasantry. There was not the slightest doubt that they intended to do their utmost to oppose Romania's advance to socialism. Still, both added socialist-flavoured ideas to their ideological bag of tricks. The National Liberals presented themselves as disciples of the 1920s sociologist St. Zeletin and his successor D. Draghicescu, who preached the "renewal of capitalism" on the basis of "liberal socialism". The National Tsaranist Party argued for "revolutionary transformations" (read: agrarian reforms) to establish a "peasant state". Their ideologists stressed an "anti-capitalist" slant, which in many respects was akin to the Narodnik socialism of the Russian SRs.²

In the author's opinion, the above historical survey is extremely enlightening. There is but one inference to be drawn from the subsequent striking divergence among parties and movements which ~~once~~ professed "the same" socialist ideals: in political practice, especially during periods of decisive class battles, differences in the concepts, forms and means of attaining socialism are at times more consequential than consensus on its desirability as an ultimate goal. This is true not only because those who defend the interests of capital are temporarily obliged to mask their congenital anti-socialist hostility through "socialistic" demagoguery and invariably end up in the reactionary camp. It is true because democratic activists who sincerely strive

¹ Cf. *Ceskoslovenska společnost a komuniste v letech 1945-1948*, Prague, 1967, pp. 31, 35, 61-62; Josef Belda and al., *Na rozhraní dvou epoch*, Prague, 1968, p. 28.

² Cf. *Istoria Rumyni, 1918-1970* (A History of Romania: 1918-1970), Moscow, 1971, pp. 289-91.

for socialist transformations are all too often bewitched by illusions far from the reality of the class struggle and thus either tumble into absolute complicity with the bourgeoisie or, suffering ideological and political defeat, fall into oblivion.

The latter case deserves particular attention. For it is, of course, impossible to state that all past and present adherents of socialism who take exception to scientific communism in theory or practice wittingly oppose the social ideals of the working class and the struggle for the socialist future. Beyond all doubt, people sincerely committed to socialist ideals and goals are well represented in the social-democratic parties. It would be pointless to accuse them of conscious support for imperialism or defence of capitalist interests. But when, say, West European workers follow the "class cooperation" recipes concocted by the right-wing social-democratic leadership, it is clear that they suffer from delusions which lead them astray from socialist goals.

For this reason, Marxists-Leninists lead an ideological and theoretical struggle for scientific socialism, against "democratic", "ethical", "national" and any other variety of socialism, against the very idea of "pluralism" in the interpretation of socialism. They do not only fight the enemies of the working class, the anti-Communists, they fight *for* all the working masses, *for* the democrats, *for* all those who may not share or have not yet acquired the Marxist-Leninist world outlook, have not yet become Communists, but sincerely work towards the socialist transformation of society.

History has thoroughly corroborated the Marxist-Leninist precept regarding the diversity of ways and means in the transition from capitalism to socialism, the potential national uniqueness of any given new society, deriving from cultural, historical and other factors. It offers no less incontrovertible proof that historical progress, the successive supplanting of social formations, is governed by tendencies working with iron necessity,¹ that each individual society undergoing the capitalist-socialist transition displays both the regular features of and its own unique variation on this process and, finally, that the objective laws invol-

¹ Cf. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 19.

ved may not be ignored. Now that many a nation has attained the Marxist-Leninist scientific ideal, the concept of "socialism" has become a genuine theoretical universal. As Marx wrote: "On the whole, the most general abstractions emerge only in the richest concrete development context where one and the same feature is common to many or all phenomena. At that point, this one and the same is no longer conceivable in a unique form."¹ Today socialism's main features as a new order, as a special socio-economic formation, distinct from all historical predecessors, are more than ever apparent.

Given their validity, demonstrated in both theory and practice, is it possible to dismiss the objective laws of the socialist transformation of society without succumbing to voluntarism? Most emphatically, no. Leninist revolutionaries incorporate them into every facet of their political strategy. Of course, in many instances, they might well subjectively prefer forms and methods other than those dictated by the implacable forces of history. But their choice is limited by reality, and necessity leaves scant scope for wishful thinking. The situation described so succinctly in the following excerpt from Engels' "Principles of Communism", is a case in point:

"Question: Will it be possible to bring about the abolition of private property by peaceful methods?

"Answer: It is to be desired that this could happen, and Communists certainly would be the last to resist it. The Communists know only too well that all conspiracies are not only futile but even harmful. They know only too well that revolutions are not made deliberately and arbitrarily, but that everywhere and at all times they have been the necessary outcome of circumstances entirely independent of the will and the leadership of particular parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat is in nearly every civilised country forcibly suppressed, and that thus the opponents of the Communists are working with all their might towards a revolution. Should the oppressed proletariat in the end be goaded into a revolution, we Communists will then defend the cause

¹ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Rohentwurf (1857-1858)*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1939, p. 25.

of the proletarians by deed just as well as we do now by word."¹

From this standpoint, any attempt to disregard the objective laws of history and revolution can only be taken as a concession to subjectivism, as a step bordering on a socialist throwback from a science to Utopianism. All too often it is precisely this variant of intolerable voluntarism which, in the author's opinion, is presented by those theorists and their followers who would force the socialist struggle of the proletariat and the working people into preconceived schemas (and "force", not "incorporate" is the proper word since it is common knowledge that Marxists-Leninists have always taken account of the specific conditions and features of each nation and nationality). Political, moral, cultural, traditional or national as the case may be, these schemas are much more convenient than real life, where the laws of revolution constantly correct even the most attractive theoretical models and fabrications. The author believes that such theoretical monuments to voluntarism lose sight of what Enrico Berlinguer, Secretary-General of the Italian Communist Party, so aptly terms the difficult step "from Utopian simplicity to the complexity of historical reality".²

If the revolutionary struggle conforms not to some arbitrarily formulated ideal, but objective laws then to reject socialism as a single theoretical entity, i. e., to dispute its invariability, is quite simply untenable. In effect, it strips the struggle of its definite goal. It represents a *que sera sera* attitude to the consequences of revolution. Of course, no schema can possibly hope to predict every last detail of the socialist society to be erected on the independent socio-political, revolutionary, creative effort of the broad masses. But this only proves that the problem can and must be solved through scientific analysis, so as to establish the overriding goal of the socialist revolution, its central, definitive and obligatory feature no matter what form its many and diverse manifestations may take.

As the first step to the proper solution of this problem, the scientific, materialist concept of the laws of social de-

¹ Frederick Engels, "Principles of Communism", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, pp. 349-50.

² *L'Unità*, 6 marzo 1978.

velopment demands that all quests for the socialist revolutionary goal in the fields of politics, law, ethics, justice or abstract humanistic ideals be abandoned. Following Marx and Engels, one must adopt the unshakeable position that "organisation of Communism" is "essentially economic".¹ Following Lenin, one must probe deeper into the dialectical connection between economic and political factors in the transition from capitalism to socialism; one must understand that although revolution is dominated by politics, its supreme goal is the economic reorganisation of society.²

At this point, it is only natural to ask: what is the general economic objective in socialist revolution? Economic uplift? Technical re-equipment on the national scale? Redistribution of income and material wealth to benefit the working people? In fact, victorious socialist revolutions have attained all these and other socio-economic goals. Then again, they represent the consequence, not the essence of socialist transformations. As achievements which affect, on the one hand, the productive forces and, on the other, distribution, they have little to say on the quintessence of socialism—the nature of production relations. According to Marxism, however, this very aspect of the organisation of society determines its affairs, as well as the entire course of its development. Which is why the fundamentally economic goal of socialist revolution must be understood as nothing less than the reshaping of production relations and the property relations lying at their core.

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Moscow 1976, p. 81.

² Cf. V. I. Lenin, "Original Version of the Article 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, Moscow, 1969, p. 71.

In the "Manifesto of the Communist Party", Marx and Engels described the Communists' support for each and every revolutionary movement aimed against the existing social and political order, and noted that "in all these movements they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time".¹ Public ownership of the means of production is the economic cornerstone of socialism. The socialist experience acquired by European, Asian and Latin American countries substantiates this fundamental Marxist precept. Communist parties the world over have made socialisation of the basic means of production the key demand in their struggle to liberate labour from the oppression of capital.

Why return to these theoretically grounded and practically confirmed tenets? Because, once again as so often in the past, they have moved into the very centre of debates both academic and ideological. Bourgeois and reformist theoreticians are forever twisting Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the economic basis of socialism to accuse communist parties of adhering to "dogmatic principles" which must be jettisoned if they are to be accepted in contemporary "democratic society". The following charge, laid by *Time* magazine, is typical: "Communism is dogmatic in its determination to abolish private property and nationalise the means of production as the first steps toward achieving its ul-

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, p. 519.

timate goal, the classless society."¹ Similar allegations form the basis of systematic attacks on revolutionary Communists who are supposedly blind to the magnitude of changes and complexities in the capitalist economy, who do not understand that the only cure they prescribe—socialising the means of production—is no longer relevant to its many ailments. The economic programme put forward by the Communists stands accused of disregarding contemporary economic problems, the real needs of the working people and the options for their immediate satisfaction; their proper investigation is deemed beyond its aims and capacities. The radical economic transformation targeted in the revolutionary strategy of Communists is censured for spawning nothing but chaos, violence and, in the long run, economic collapse. Finally, the very question of property is dismissed as beside the point, its significance vastly overrated by the Communists. Democratising the economy, not nationalising the means of production is the way to meet the aspirations of the working people.

Let us now proceed to an in-depth analysis of this position.

The Communist Alternative

The communist alternative to bourgeois economic policy incorporates both the working people's present-day concerns, their immediate needs, and their fundamental interests, their long-term goals. In other words, present and future considerations are, and have always been, organically balanced in the Communists' programme. Its ideological opponents follow a hallowed tradition of casting aspersions on the second, vital element through criticism of the first, accusing Communists of ignoring economic reality.

According to a veritable chorus of bourgeois and reformist historians, during the preparations for the Russian socialist revolution the "struggle for power" totally eclipsed the workers' vital economic interests in the minds of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Fabrications of this sort date back to the Bolsheviks' political rivals of 1917, with the

¹ *Time*, March 13, 1978, p. 12.

conciliatory parties in the lead. To cite but one example: in the opinion of Menshevik leader I. Tsereteli, Bolshevik policy hinged on outright "dismissal of any improvement whatsoever in the proletarian position until such time as a 'workers' and peasants' dictatorship' were established".¹ The phrase "any improvement whatsoever" betrays this statement as unadulterated falsehood and a crude distortion of historical fact. For in truth, the Bolshevik Party struggled mightily to help the workers improve their lot.

Just before the October Revolution, the Russian proletariat's socio-economic demands centred on the eight-hour work day. At the time, legislation instituting the shorter day at previous wage levels was practically non-existent in the world. The bourgeois government and the conciliatory leaders of the Soviets unanimously supported the capitalists who insisted that all relevant documentation refer to the eight-hour working day as a temporary measure only, introduced in lieu of some future law. Actual legal codification, should it ever be drawn up and enacted, was left as an open question. More to the point, the entire issue aggravated the class and political struggle.

As early as March 1917, the bourgeois press mounted a campaign accusing the workers of anti-patriotism and sabotaging national economic interests. It set off the first round of a reactionary counter-attack on the economic rights of the working people and was subsequently joined, in the late spring and summer of 1917, by the Mensheviks and other members of the conciliatory faction in the Soviets. Without openly denouncing the eight-hour working day, the conciliators seized the main points of the March articles, raising the argument to the conceptual level in their appeal for the "self-limitation of the working class". Their reasoning is summed up in a speech by Peshekhonov, Popular Socialist and Minister of Provisions, delivered at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets. The capitalists risked losing "nearly" all their profits, said Peshekhonov: "But, comrades, this is not enough. The mass of the population must be made to understand that it too is called upon to make sacrifices; it must realise that in

¹ I. G. Tsereteli, *Vospominaniya o Fevral'skoi revolyutsii. Kniga vtoraya* (The February Revolution Remembered: Book Two), Paris, 1963, p. 282.

view of the present situation, complete satisfaction of their demands is unthinkable, that it must not ask for any improvement at the moment."¹

The immediate target of this bombast was the strike movement, for the "self-limitation doctrine" was intended to quash the workers' demand for wage increases, price controls, and an end to the capitalist policy of lock-outs and sabotage. But in a wider context, it whipped up public sentiment to the point where enacting any pro-worker labour legislation was simply out of the question.

The working-class masses could see for themselves that their struggle for better working conditions had objectively escalated into power politics. The march of events spotlighted their one, self-evident, choice: either a society in which their economic rights were doomed to perpetual conflict with national interests or, conversely, a society built to defend these rights and enshrine their guarantees in state law.

The Bolshevik Party took the following stance. The austerity regime was, beyond all doubt, a necessary evil. Given the resources at hand, production and distribution control was the only way to avert economic disaster and famine. But the Ministers and conciliatory leaders of the Soviets declared that the capitalists had contributed their share to the "cross-country economy campaign", that it was now the workers' turn to follow suit—and this was a barefaced lie. Lenin's many brochures, speeches, articles and commentaries paint a convincing portrait of the times, documenting the capitalists' continuing plunder of national wealth, their soaring war profits and veritable orgy of public embezzlement. In this light, the "self-limitation" appeal clearly mocked the working class. In the meantime, the Bolsheviks kept up their unflagging support for measures directed at the immediate improvement of the working people's economic lot. This is indisputable fact.

What situation do we face today? What are the basic elements in the communist parties' constructive economic policy? What demands and solutions do they advance, how effective is their influence on economic affairs?

¹ Quoted from I. G. Tsereteli, *Vospominaniya o Fevral'skoi revolyutsii, Kniga pervaya* (The February Revolution Remembered: Book One), Paris, 1963, p. 444.

There is no single, all-encompassing answer to these questions. Much depends on the particular situation, the given level of social development with which each national party operates. For example, Communists fighting under a rigid authoritarian regime are quite naturally forced to go underground, to focus on political tasks connected with eliminating this regime and securing the bare rudiments of a functional environment for itself and other progressive forces. This in turn defines their approach to economic issues: with less scope for immediate action, they can scarcely exert any appreciable influence on resolving the problems they delineate. On the other hand, of course, they can often make their voice heard in the workers' economic struggle, chiefly within the trade union context.

Communist parties, which enjoy legal status, hold a certain number of seats in municipal, regional or Parliamentary bodies, take quite a different approach. They can tackle economic issues head on, since their demands and proposals are far more likely to have an immediate impact on the working people's struggle for better living standards and social status, if not on the national, then at least on the local or regional scale.

The class struggle in all its aspects—economic, political and ideological—has always been the central concern of Communists, whatever conditions they operate under. The point is so self-evident as to dispense with detailed discussion. For the present purposes, it is enough to focus on the significance of the constructive economic programme offered by the revolutionary party, and the two constant factors affecting its rise: (1) (noted above) the Party's increasing political strength, influence, authority and status; and (2) crisis-signal accumulation in the economy, the breakdown of "normal" production and distribution mechanisms. History confirms the uniformity of this function.

The Russian Bolshevik Party, for example, accorded close attention to economic problems and steadily implemented a number of vital transformations in this sphere (concerning, for the most part, working conditions and the system of agrarian relations). An enormous contribution to Marxist political economics, Lenin's works set the Bolsheviks a clear-cut economic goal and thus, one and all, reinforced the theoretical basis for their political strategy. Only after

the February Revolution did the Leninist Party issue its first complete programme, detailing concrete measures, transformations and prompt solutions for Russia's universally recognised economic ills. At the time, two questions were uppermost in the public mind: first, who was to direct the immediate transition to socialist revolution and, secondly, what was to be done about the economic devastation wrought by the predatory big bourgeoisie, the war and public embezzlement.

As democratic and, subsequently, socialist revolutions swept through Central and South-East Europe, Asia and Cuba, national communist parties concentrated on the economic future, developing constructive programmes for postwar recovery and radical democratic-economic changes.

Present-day party policy documents offer solutions to problems of direct concern to the masses. In the capitalist countries of the 1970s, snowballing economic crises greatly afflicted the working people, triggering mass confusion. The occasional optimistic prognosis, tossed as a placebo to the people, more often than not proved unfounded. Even when production slumps gave way to comparatively bullish periods, unemployment and inflation rates, the bane of the labouring masses, ran constantly high. Statistics lose all meaning beside the sheer stability of these phenomena, observed at all stages of the crisis cycle, with absolutely no let-up in sight. Since public attention in the capitalist countries is riveted on this problem, the political authority of any party is largely dependent on the viability of the solution it offers.

Communists would betray their Marxist calling if they failed to respond to this public demand. They would not be the political vanguard of the working class if they did not share its interests, needs and cares. To spare any effort in helping them bear the burden of the crisis, in offering immediate and realistic assistance that is, would mean cutting themselves off from the people.

"Nowadays it isn't enough to tell the working people what is wrong in the country or why," writes Herbert Mies, Chairman of the German Communist Party. "They want to know a way out of a difficult situation and we must show it to them. They expect us to advance an alternative to the bourgeoisie's bankrupt economic policy and it's our

duty to offer a scientifically sound action programme and organise the masses around it."¹

The Declaration of the West European Communist and Workers' Parties' Conference (Brussels, 26-28 January 1974) notes the Communists' determination to push through their own economic programme, a sharp contrast to the bourgeois policy of thrusting the entire crisis in capitalism onto the working people.²

A similar stance is taken by Communists in other parts of the non-socialist world. For example, the Arab Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, held in early 1975, declared "active, creative participation... in the discussion of economic and social problems"³ a crucial step towards enhancing their role in the Arab national liberation movement.

Communists in the capitalist countries have not turned their backs on today's burning economic issues. Each Party seeks solutions appropriate to its own national or regional conditions. Each puts top priority on backing the socio-economic demands of the masses for job security, pay raises, or failing that, guaranteed wage levels and improved working conditions, etc. Communist parties launch projects designed to guard the labouring masses against further losses and resolutely support those proposed by trade unions and other labour-interest groups.

Several examples are listed below.

The West German Communists' main policy document highlights their struggle to limit monopoly profits and property expansion. This they see as "the essential prerequisite for a more stable economic growth, turning more dividends from rising labour productivity over to the working people and improving their living standards".⁴

The Communist Party of Greece calls upon the masses to support such objectives as higher incomes and national revenue shares for all working people. Direct wage hikes, as well as taxation and price policy changes, are slated as their immediate, short-term targets.⁵

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 18, August 1975, No. 8, p. 14.

² Cf. *Rabochii klass i sovremenniy mir* (The Working Class and the World Today), No. 3, 1974, pp. 149-58.

³ *Nidel al-Shaab*, early April 1975.

⁴ "Programm der D.K.P.", *Unsere Zeit*, 25. Oktober 1978, Dokumentation, S. 16.

⁵ Cf. *Thèses du CC du PCG pour le 10^e Congrès*, p. 61.

The French Communists have worked out a comprehensive action programme to boost the workers' living standards. They intend to establish a reasonable minimum wage, with enhanced purchasing power, shorten the work week, take steps to solve the employment problem and implement agrarian and tax reforms.¹

The Communist Party of Denmark offers a democratic economic policy directed against big capital. The plan is to use national resources for the material and cultural benefit of the working people.²

The constructive proposals advanced by communist and workers' parties respond to the socio-economic needs of the broad masses; they invent neither fictitious diseases nor textbook cures. They are not given to futuristic fantasies or making demands which the people have yet to filter through their own experience and consciousness. René Urbany, Chairman of the Communist Party of Luxembourg, drives this very point home in his comments on the late 1977 publicity campaign promoting his party's solution to national economic ills: "As I write these words, the CPL is in the process of arranging many public meetings across the country, especially in the industrial cities of the south and the central regions. At these meetings attended by many people (among them by many workers and employees belonging to the Socialist Party) the idea of nationalising the steel industry is being discussed openly for the first time and is gaining support. Let us recall that only a few years ago it would have been simply inconceivable in Luxembourg to contest the claims of the all-powerful multinational concerns to dominate this industry. Now, the masses have themselves advanced to an understanding of the need to keep big business in check. We Communists believe it to be our duty to produce a clear-cut programme making it possible to realise this urgent need."³ Without radical economic change these festering sores will never heal, the masses will never get full satisfaction and Communists must convince them of this fact.

¹ Cf. "La voie démocratique au socialisme pour la France", *L'Humanité*, 13 février 1979, Supplément.

² Cf. *The 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Denmark*, Copenhagen, 23-26 September 1976, p. 91.

³ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 21, April 1978, No. 4, p. 15.

While championing the working people's concrete economic needs, the Communists have run into a thorny complication. During the 1970s economic crisis, the power elite in many a capitalist country resorted to variations on the "austerity regime", "equal responsibility" and "equitable distribution" themes. The Communists had to decide on an appropriate response to this line, to the idea that since "the entire nation" had to tighten its belt to pull out of the crisis, the working class should postpone its wage increase demands, for the time being at least.

Several national communist parties opted for unconditional condemnation of the "austerity" policy. In Greece, for example, the Communists announced that the government's "thrift" campaign pursued two closely connected goals: shifting the brunt of the crisis onto the working people and leaving the monopolies ample scope for steady, if not higher, profits.¹ The French Communists took a similar stance.

By the latter half of the 1970s, the British working class had come to a crossroads: it could either support the "income" or pay restraint policy set down in the Labour Party's "social contract", or continue to make what the upper crust termed "more and more unrealistic" wage demands. In the ensuing debate some suggested that the working class "take a realistic attitude", consent to wage ceilings and, in the meantime, "press more and more to extend its influence and its control over . . . the area of resource allocation and investment decision . . . because it is here that the heartland of capitalism resides, and it is this which controls precisely those factors which affect the realisation of working-class aspirations and needs".² In the same vein, it was argued that were the working-class movement to succumb to pay rise fever it would "scare off capital investment", wreak still greater havoc in the economy and add fuel to the unemployment-inflation spiral. In the long run, so they maintained, it was the working class who would suffer from its own demands. It was therefore necessary "to face the situation honestly" and concentrate on solving "central management and control problems". According to several Communists in this camp, "only if we recognise and state openly now that voluntary pay restraint is a necessa-

¹ *Thèses du CC du PCG pour le 10^e Congrès*, p. 58.

² *Marxism Today*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1975, p. 124.

ry adjunct of this alternative policy, will we have any chance of cementing together the bloc of social forces which ... can transform our programme from a gleam in the eye into a living reality".¹

From the opposing viewpoint it was objected that "these are false claims made on the false premise that wage increases are a major cause of inflation".² They pointed to the real fruits of the Labour Party's "social contract"; the working class's voluntary restraints had not induced the employers or the government to live up to any of their promises, its sacrifices had neither boosted investment nor curbed rampant unemployment. Gordon McLennan, Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Great Britain, observed that "no Communist economists ... would agree to control of wages in the absence of effective control on prices, profits, investments, imports and capital expenditure abroad".³ Elsewhere, McLennan wrote: "At our last congress, in November 1975, we expressed our total opposition to government cuts in real wages which will impose further hardship on working people and deepen the crisis ... We expressed confidence that if a Labour government or a Socialist government carries out a programme of policies in the interests of workers and their families, then trade unions ... will take this fully into account in formulating their wage demands."⁴

The discussion came to a natural conclusion in late 1978 and early 1979, when the Labour Government's white paper on wage ceilings was rejected by the Trade Union Congress. The truth was out at last—the "social contract" simply would not work. A stupendous wave of strikes plunged the country into a well-nigh national crisis, culminating in the fall of the Labour Government in May 1979.

Beyond all doubt, a communist party's stance on the labour-inflation issue may vary with both objective and subjective factors. Within the latter category, a given party position follows its assessment of local working-class capacities and the Communists' actual influence on the bourgeois government's economic policy. But whatever its particular situation, each communist party not only defends

¹ *Comment*, 26 June 1976, Vol. 14, No. 13, p. 204.

² *Morning Star*, 16 June 1976.

³ *Ibid.*, 12 June 1976.

⁴ *Ibid.*

the immediate economic interests of the working people, but also takes account of the correlation between class structure, political environment and revolutionary potential.

A strikingly different set of problems is posed by countries on the verge of democratic revolution, on the crest of a massive, socio-political upsurge. Such was the case in Portugal. No sooner had the fascist dictatorship been overthrown, in April 1974, than the Portuguese Communists adopted the principle of active participation in democratic economic reconstruction, in order to make a positive contribution to progressive economic development. Theirs was a single and immutable criterion, whether they directly participated in state bodies, as under the first five provisional governments, or formed the Parliamentary opposition, supporting or rejecting economic measures sponsored by the government or other parties. "The PCP," writes its Secretary-General Alvaro Cunhal, "has never taken the line of systematic opposition. Rather, it has always sought constructive participation in national decision-making."¹

At the beginning of 1978, Cunhal outlined his party's position as follows: "Faced with a catastrophic deficit in the trade and payments balance, the PCP was the first party to call for an 'austerity regime'. But our understanding of the term differs from the view taken by the capitalist and bourgeois parties. 'Austerity' does not mean that the working people foot the crisis bill while the capitalists and latifundists are paid billions of pesos in compensation for expropriated property."²

In countries lacking the Portuguese oppositional ferment, yet another situation arises. The simple balance of class, political forces gives the Communist Party decisive voice in national, including economic, policy-making. One such example is Italy, where the Communist Party, as Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev noted, "has won such positions that practically no one major question in that country can be solved without its participation".³

The Italian Communists' response to the "austerity regime" was dictated by the Party's general political position.

¹ *El País*, 2 de febrero de 1978.

² *Ibid.*

³ L. I. Brezhnev, *Speech at the Plenary Meeting of the CC of the CPSU on October 25, 1976*, Moscow, 1976, p. 52.

In 1977, eight months after an impressive showing in the parliamentary elections the Italian Communists joined a six-party common front for prompt action on the economic, social and political crisis. The Party worked out its own interpretation of the "austerity policy", pinpointing its long-term effects on the working people and the nation as a whole. "To my mind," said ICP Chairman Luigi Longo, "the working people commit no crime in demanding guarantees for the future. They do not want to make sacrifices now only to find that they have helped restore the politico-economic set-up which produced the crisis in the first place; they do not want new Lockheed and Sindona scandals, new 'black conspiracies' or a re-run of the so-called SIFAR and SID 'negligence'. It is not enough to say: 'Let us deal with the crisis and then come what may.' The point is *how* do we deal with it; what are our goals and perspectives? The working people want to be sure that when we emerge from the crisis tunnel we won't come up against the same old political and economic forces, the same old cast of characters, ready to start the whole process over again."¹

Communists realise that certain political circles associated with the revolutionary working-class movement tend to overlook or misinterpret the connection between economic democratisation and the ultimate goal, eliminating the exploitation of labour by capital. They might well set forth a programme for stable economic growth, substantial income redistribution to benefit the working majority and effective democratic control over economic processes. And granted, they do promote radical restructuring of the capitalist economy. Then again there are those who claim that these structural changes are all it takes to render the economic system a socialist character and put an end to the exploitation of labour. Socialism as they picture it retains a large measure of private-property production relations and "free market" transactions. In other words, radical economic reforms of a general-democratic nature have somehow replaced the socialist goal of the transformation of economy.

It makes no difference if this misrendering of socialist economics is bolstered by highflow phrases such as "genuine democratic rights", "no more class exploitation and inequality", or "equal rights to assert one's individuality".

¹ *L'Unità*, 20 ottobre 1976.

None of these fine sentiments clarify the intrinsic difference between the new economic system and the old capitalist order. Indeed modern capitalism, to quote an authoritative bourgeois author, consists of "'modified' or 'mixed' capitalist economies. The hallmarks of this group are: a pluralistic society with multi-party government; a relatively high level of industrial development and per capita output; built-in capacity for continued growth; substantial but not dominant public sectors; elaborate development of private markets and 'modern' economic institutions".¹ Rather than comment on the polemical aspects of this description, suffice it to say that more clarity and precision is demanded of revolutionary theory, for the working class must be armed with a battleplan for economic struggle which promises real socialist reconstruction as opposed to some new, "improved" version of capitalism.

The pros and cons of constructive economic tactics within the capitalist framework versus the struggle for socialist economic transformation are no newcomers on the revolutionary scene. The problem was debated, for example, on the eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. And the Bolshevik solution is most enlightening.

To begin with, it must be recalled that the Leninist party repudiated the leftist theorists who argued that the revolutionary proletariat should voluntarily abstain from decision-making on current national economic issues. The polemics came to a head at the Sixth RSDLP(B) Congress. Several delegates, particularly P. Osinsky, voiced the doubt that the working class should make any effort to cure the economy while the bourgeoisie had gained power. It was suggested that the capitalists would undertake the task on their own, in order to protect their own interests. This point of view was rejected by the Congress at large. Subsequent events exploded its basic premise, as the bourgeoisie proved utterly incapable of mustering the organisational strength and production control required to surmount the crisis. In no uncertain terms, the Congress condemned the very idea of entrusting the future of an economy as yet bourgeois to the bourgeoisie itself.

Even on the threshold of the October Revolution, with state power within immediate reach of the working class

¹ Lloyd G. Reynolds, *The Three Worlds of Economics*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1971, p. 31.

and the Bolshevik Party, Lenin and his followers were against rejecting an economic programme geared to bourgeois Russia. Lenin sharply criticised the proposal to exclude general democratic objectives ("minimum programme") from the Party programme and concentrate exclusively on socialist transformation. The revolutionary proletariat could not accept this leftist position which, in Lenin's words, amounted to "we do not wish to 'demand anything from the bourgeoisie', ... we do not wish to work on petty details within the framework of bourgeois society".¹

The Bolshevik economic programme on the eve of the socialist revolution was not revolutionary in the sense that its demands were exoteric, understood by and relevant to the Party alone. On the contrary, as Lenin stressed, "everyone recognises measures of this kind and in this direction as inevitable, and in many places they have already been launched from the most diverse sides".² Where then does its singular revolutionary character lie; what distinguished it from other socio-political platforms?

Historical testimony can shed light on this question. We have already seen that restricting private property was one of the measures "recognised as inevitable by all", to quote Lenin. Even the obvious bourgeois puppets in the Provisional Government admitted as much. Their viewpoint is outlined in the report appended to the Provisional Government's declaration on economic policy: "While the government considers it impossible to institute socialism at present, it cannot recommend the country return to a free economy as the representatives of, for the most part, commercial capital, so recently insisted ... which leaves one option only: state regulation of the key branches of the economy, through forces advanced by the economy itself, retaining the private-property and personal initiative principles, but subordinating both to the public interest."³ The excerpt indicates that the bourgeoisie accepted state control as necessary to curb

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Revision of the Party Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, Moscow, 1972, p. 171.

² V. I. Lenin, "One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 372.

³ *Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii nakanune Velikoi Oktyabrskoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii* (Russia's Economic Position on the Eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution), Part 1, p. 222.

the private-enterprise rampage, but insisted on its monopolistic right to implement this state control.¹

And therein lies the crux of the matter. Not in introducing or vetoing state control, tackling or ignoring economic collapse, but in one single question: *which class* was to take charge? For this very reason, the problem was left largely unsolved in Russia between the February and the October revolutions: neither the bourgeoisie nor the working people could organise the state to regulate the economy according to their particular class interests.

Lenin proved that economic "remedies" can be either reactionary-bureaucratic or revolutionary-democratic. In the first instance, a capitalist administration seeks capitalist ends, while in the second, the working people themselves play a decisive role in protecting their own interests.²

Moreover, the entire history of the twentieth-century revolutionary, democratic movement corroborates Lenin's tenet. In fact, the revolutionary nature of any economic transformation "recognised as inevitable by all" is to be judged solely on the class orientation of the socio-political force in charge.

In Central and South-East Europe, indisputable proletarian hegemony in economic democratisation and post-war recovery guaranteed their revolutionary character. Significantly, the communist parties concerned drew on the Russian revolutionary proletariat's pre-October experience as summarised in Lenin's works in their approach to post-war economic reconstruction.

Closer to the present, the Chilean Revolution (1970-1973) reaffirms a clearly-defined class position as the determinant factor in economic democratisation. Analysing its achievements and failures, the Chilean Communist Party leadership stress that the revolution hinged on the establishment of workers' control over and participation in economic management. Miscalculations and omissions in this area produced a limited scope for "turning the first structural chan-

¹ Resolutions issued by the SR-Menshevik Central Executive Committee and the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee express the same viewpoint in the same words. (Cf. *Izvestiya Petrogradskogo Sovieta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov* (Proceedings of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies), 11 May, 1917.

² Cf. V. I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 358-59.

ges ... to the people's advantage".¹ As the Party observed, "the Chilean Revolution failed to create a truly transitional situation; i.e. it could not carry its democratic, anti-imperialist programme through to completion, to embark upon socialist development". Among the underlying causes, the Party singles out the revolutionary forces' failure to "democratise every aspect of the management sphere" which continued to be dominated by the bourgeoisie, the monopolists and their class privileges.²

In contrast, post-April 1974 Portugal achieved revolutionary economic democratisation because the entire process was initiated and directed by the working class and the working people. The Portuguese Communists do their utmost to ensure continuing economic progress and overcome serious economic difficulties. To what does the PCP attribute its success? According to the Eighth PCP Congress, socio-economic progress is possible "if and only if the working people are actively involved in government action on economic reorganisation and development".³ And the Ninth PCP Congress (May-June 1979) confirmed the validity of this approach.⁴ Clearly, the Portuguese Communists' economic programme hinges on the class force which is to implement it.

Thus, two conclusions can be drawn from the revolutionary struggle past and present: first, it disproves the bourgeois and reformist contention that Communists are either incapable of or simply not interested in handling the complexities of contemporary economics; and secondly, it demonstrates that only when the working class and the working people assume command can economic "remedies" within the capitalist framework be combined with a more progressive orientation. Only they can execute the democratic economic reforms which pave the way to the next stage of revolutionary development, to socialist changes proper.

The economic programmes drawn up by communist and workers' parties have both practical and theoretical roots.

¹ *Los 1000 días de revolución*, p. 92.

² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³ *VIII Congresso do PCP. 11 a 14 Nov. 1976*, Avantel, Lisbon, 1977, pp. 234-35.

⁴ Cf. A. Cunhal, "O Relatório de actividade do Comité Central ao IX Congresso do PCP (sujeito a alterações)", Avantel, Lisbon, 1979, pp. 49-50.

The first demands the analysis of concrete national conditions, while the second considers socialisation of the means of production crucial to the socio-economic transformations required in building socialism.

According to certain bourgeois ideologists, this interaction represents some sort of "historical paradox". The Russian October Revolution, for example, is seen in the following light: "Paradoxically, it was the [promised] redistribution of private property that consolidated the socialist revolution."¹ This, of course, is stretching the point. No such "promise" was ever made by the Russian revolutionary proletariat and the Bolshevik Party. The Bolsheviks' pre-October economic programme did not include the immediate, wholesale elimination of private-property relations. Instead, only the "strategic heights" of the economy (banks, major monopolies, etc.) were scheduled for nationalisation directly after the Revolution.

This mistaken viewpoint has given rise to all manner of bourgeois and reformist speculation on the Bolsheviks' supposed flaws: they were too "indecisive" and "ill equipped" to put their own theory of socialist economic organisation in practice. Or, to quote a similar and equally typical claim, the Bolsheviks "had no concrete plan for the practical building of socialism".² These are nothing more than an up-dated version of the innuendoes cast by all the October Revolution's earliest opponents, from the Mensheviks to the Cadets. The Menshevik Sukhanov, for instance, declared at the time that "the Bolsheviks had no idea of what they were up to".³ According to the Cadet Milyukov, "the Bolsheviks faltered in the first practical steps on the socialist (or 'Communist') aspect of their doctrine" because they were allegedly overwhelmed by "obscure ideas concerning the economic side of the social revolution they had undertaken".⁴

Several modern bourgeois writers take a slightly different approach. They argue that the creative economic policy

¹ Iring Fetscher, *Von Marx zur Sowjetideologie*, Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, Frankfurt am Main, 1972, S. 72.

² Cf. *Osteuropa*, Heft 1/2, Januar/Februar 1982, S. 40.

³ Nik. Sukhanov, *Zapiski o revolyutsii* (Notes on the Revolution). Vol. 7, Berlin-Petrograd-Moscow, 1922, p. 50.

⁴ P. N. Milyukov, *Rossiya na perelome. Bolshevistskii period russkoi revolyutsii* (Russia at a Crossroads: The Bolshevik Period of the Russian Revolution), Vol. 1, p. 134.

pursued by the Bolshevik Party upon its October victory "deviated from Marxist doctrine".¹

What then continues to fuel this school of thought? Obviously, it is founded on the misinterpretation of two aspects in the revolutionary economic reconstruction of post-October Russia. The first concerns the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik programme. Needless to say, its ultimate objective was to establish a socialist economy by socialising the means of production. As discussed above, the ultra-radical "introduction of socialism" was never so much as considered a feasible means to this end. After the Revolution, Lenin wrote, "there would be a more gradual transition to the new social and economic relations",² "the state power—the proletariat—[would make] an attempt to pass, as gradually as possible, breaking up as little of the old as possible, to the new social relations, while adapting itself, as much as possible, one may say, to the conditions then prevailing".³ Does this indicate even a temporary deviation from Marxist "doctrine"? Not in the slightest. For this selfsame "doctrine", according to no less an authority than Engels, stipulated that the immediate elimination of private property "would be just as impossible as at one stroke to increase the existing productive forces to the degree necessary for instituting community of property. Hence, the proletarian revolution ... will transform existing society only gradually, and be able to abolish private property only when the necessary quantity of the means of production has been created".⁴

While strictly observing the "doctrine", the Bolsheviks resolutely rejected its doctrinaire application. Before the October Revolution, Lenin wrote: "Many things will become clearer *after* the basic measures of the new type have been carried out, *after* the nationalisation of banks, *after* the introduction of workers' control; experience will tell us a lot more, for it will be the experience of millions, the experience in building a new system of economy with the

¹ Cf. P. Léon, *Histoire économique et sociale du monde*, Vol. 5, *Guerres et crises: 1914-1947*, Paris, 1977, p. 133.

² V. I. Lenin, "Seventh Moscow Gubernia Conference of the Russian Communist Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Moscow, 1966, p. 89.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴ Frederick Engels, "Principles of Communism", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, p. 350.

conscious participation of millions.... But to inject into the programme an overdose of detail is premature and may become even harmful by tying our hand with petty matters."¹

This approach to socialist transformations obviously expressed, on the one hand, the creative essence of the proletarian revolution and, on the other, its truly democratic nature. The victorious Bolshevik Party had no intention of forcing its economic "doctrine" on the working people. Quite the contrary: the entire working class and all the working people contributed their expertise to the practical implementation of the "doctrine".

But to agree that the socialist revolution followed the internal dynamics of circumstance, as opposed to textbook predictions, does certainly not imply that Marxist-Leninist theory on socialist revolution cannot deal with practical matters. On the contrary, the founders of Marxism emphasised that the concrete forms, methods and schedule for socialising the means of production would "depend on the circumstances under which our party comes to power, on the timing and means involved".² Engels also stressed another extremely important point: "Once the first radical onslaught upon private ownership has been made, the proletariat will see itself compelled to go always further, to concentrate all capital, all agriculture, all industry, all transport, and all exchange more and more in the hands of the State".³ Lenin, who realised that socialism cannot be "decreed", that the economy cannot be restructured overnight, developed a number of fundamental precepts which are valid to this day. At the initial stage of revolutionary economic transformation, he insisted, the sheer scope of the undertaking is not as crucial as the ability to seize and nationalise the "strategic heights" of the economy so as to reorient its development towards the creation of a new system to benefit all working people.

Marxism, therefore, delineates at least three aspects in socialising the means of production, each of equal signifi-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Revision of the Party Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 173.

² Friedrich Engels, "Antwort an den ehrenwerten Giovanni Bovio", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, 22. Band, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1963, p. 280.

³ Frederick Engels, "Principles of Communism", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 351.

cance to revolutionary practice: (1) the objective laws of social development govern the institution of new property forms which in turn requires (2) thoroughness, a sense of purpose and caution to avoid the pitfalls of undue haste and capture the "strategic heights" of the economy; at the same time (3) concrete measures must be tailored to the specific political, as well as economic environment.

Together, these Marxist tenets constitute the only correct approach to property socialisation in the revolutionary socialist struggle. Subsequent revolutions have reaffirmed the objective, recurrent nature of this process, first demonstrated in post-October Russia.

Accordingly, communist and workers' parties in Central and South-East Europe based their revolutionary social transformations on the gradual reconstruction of the production relations system, retaining a more or less significant private sector, while seizing key positions in the economy.

But as was the case in Russia, the actual scale and timing in socialising the means of production was largely dictated by its "punitive" character. Above all, it expressed the popular demand that those who had collaborated with the nazi occupation or local fascist regimes be stripped of both political and economic power. Not only the working people, but all patriots, including a segment of the bourgeoisie, approved of what the Socialist Unity Party of Germany termed "eliminating *monopoly capital* and turning the facilities owned by war criminals, profiteers and fascists over to independent government bodies".¹ Consider, for example, the following statement made by Jacob Kaiser, a prominent member of the Christian-Democratic Union (CDU), a bourgeois party in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany: "The CDU is convinced . . . that those who dragged the German people and the entire world into the misery of war must be deprived of the economic levers of power."²

Even prior to the foundation of the GDR, facilities accounting for 40 per cent of the East German industrial product had been nationalised under "punitive socialisa-

¹ *30 Jahre volksetgene Betriebe, Dokumente und Materialien zum 30. Jahrestag des Volksentscheids in Sachsen*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1976, S. 76.

² Quoted from *DDR. Werden und Wachsen*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1974, S. 92.

tion" (a measure sanctioned, incidentally, by the Potsdam Agreement). Czechoslovakia dispossessed German and Hungarian capitalists, as well as local collaborationists; by May 1945, 47 per cent of all Czech enterprises were under "national administration", signalling, as Klement Gottwald put it, the dissolution of its "internal Munich Pact".¹

As the revolutions progressed, "punitive socialisation" evolved from an anti-fascist, national liberation, basically democratic movement into a tool used by the working people's power to crush the bourgeois counter-revolutionary saboteurs. Often, it was necessary to overshoot—and by a considerable margin—immediate economic re-organisation targets. The Cuban Communist Party, for example, observed that its 1968 nationalisation of small-scale enterprises "was not necessarily a question of principle in the construction of socialism at that stage", rather it responded to "the negative political activity of a strata of urban capitalists who hindered the process".²

Closer to the present, Portugal affords an example of the "leap forward" in socialisation imperative to revolution. Alvaro Cunhal writes: "Certain people believe that revolutionary cadres, particularly the Portuguese Communist Party, have set a pace at odds with the real power structure. But the truth is, fascism would have long ago re-claimed Portugal had the nation's revolutionaries not had the courage to deal monopoly capital and the big landowners a heavy blow, had the working class not taken effective control of many enterprises in the key sectors of the economy."³ Elsewhere Cunhal notes: "It was not only a matter of principle: economic sabotage, fraud, industrial abuses, reactionary conspiracies—troubles of every description planted by the leading capitalist groups—sped up developments until finally it was decided to nationalise the banks and the primary economic branches."⁴ And indeed, the very fact that the Portuguese working people were able to push so far ahead

¹ Klement Gottwald, *Spisy*, t. XII, Státní Nakladatelství Politické Literatury, Prague, 1955, p. 174.

² *First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 60.

³ Alvaro Cunhal, *Stranitsy borby* (Battle Notes), Moscow, 1977, p. 351.

⁴ Idem, *A Revolução Portuguesa. O Passado e o Futuro*, Avantel, Lisbon, 1976, pp. 86-87.

into the economic frontline played and continues to play a most significant role in containing the political counter-revolution.

Thus, there is no universal golden mean in socialisation, nothing to fix, once and for all, the point between "too far" and "not far enough". Lenin's appraisal of War Communism is most illuminating in this respect; noting the objectively compulsory nature of the period itself and concurrent Soviet economic policy, he wrote: "It was the war and the ruin that forced us into War Communism. It was not, and could not be, a policy that corresponded to the economic tasks of the proletariat. It was a makeshift."¹ At the same time, Lenin underscored the fallacy of postulating War Communism as an inevitable phase in building socialism.²

As mentioned above, revolutionary socialisation is invariably rooted in the experience and demands of the working masses. This is its salient feature. In the summer of 1945, for instance, a mass movement encompassing not only the working class but the petty bourgeoisie as well, carried the nationalisation drive in Czechoslovakia beyond the framework of a purely anti-fascist undertaking.³ The 1946 national referendum held in what is today the German Democratic Republic counted a 77.6 per cent majority in favour of confiscating industrial facilities from Nazi activists and war criminals.⁴ Significantly, a similar referendum called at approximately the same time in the West German land of Hessen registered a 72 per cent vote for nationalising the key branches of industry. In the second case, however, despite the clear majority, monopolies and big capital kept their iron grip on the economy.

To sum up, the following conclusions can be suggested. On the one hand, we have the logic of scientific communist theory. From it the founders of Marxism deduced that the socialist revolution would amount to nothing less than the establishment of public property in the means of production. On the other, there is the logic of revolutionary prac-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Tax in Kind", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 343.

² Cf. Idem, "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 62.

³ Cf. *Istoria Chekhoslovaki* (A History of Czechoslovakia), Vol. 3, Moscow, 1960, p. 453.

⁴ Cf. *Istoria Germanskoi Demokraticheskoi Respubliki* (A History of the German Democratic Republic), Moscow, 1975, pp. 65-66.

tice, and practice is always richer and more complex than pure theory. Hence the time-honoured, though misguided, question: should revolution be expected to fit into a rigid, preconceived schema or should it follow the concrete, day-to-day requirements of its own internal dynamics, irrespective of axiomatic conformity? Clearly, we are dealing here with the correlation of the universal and the particular, the objective and the circumstantial in revolution. But to pit one side against the other, to force an inflexible "either universal theory or concrete practice" is to misconstrue the question itself. The confrontation is illegitimate, for theory discovers the objective laws which practice brings to life. And the problematics of property in revolution demonstrates their interdependence.

What is the actual intent behind the Communists' demand to socialise the means of production? Not, as we have seen, to "foist" Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the mass revolutionary-democratic movement, but to define the ultimate goal—socialism—to which this movement inevitably proceeds, according to the logic of its own gradual development. The prompt and wholesale liquidation of private property relations is not featured in current Marxist-Leninist economic programmes. Why? Because this objective demands a practical solution, a methodology which must draw on the experience gradually accumulated by the masses in the course of their own revolutionary development.

To conclude: when singling out property as the central and obligatory question in *any* revolutionary movement resolved to restructure society on the socialist model, Marxist theory points to an immutable law which places no limits whatsoever on the diversity of ways and means to be adopted in any given class economic struggle.

The Problem of Violence

On the premise that the transition from capitalism to socialism finds its economic roots in radical property realignment, that the class nature of economic and political rule is closely interdependent, the founders of Marxism-Leninism linked the birth of the new order to the inevitable use of revolutionary force. Without exception, every socialist revolution has confirmed their hypothesis.

The point is well illustrated in the recent Portuguese and Chilean revolutions. Though outside the strict parameters of socialist revolution proper, both did lay the groundwork for future socialist development. The revolutionary nature of economic reconstruction in Portugal reflected the political upheaval which forcibly ejected the fascist regime. By way of contrast, the Chilean political-economic interplay was much more complex. In a certain sense, as a unique instance of conformity to objective law, of "iron necessity", so to speak, Chile's is a far more revealing case.

In terms of state power, as the Communist Party noted, the Chilean people scored a partial, preliminary success when the working class and its allies, the progressive Popular Unity Front, cornered a relative majority in the 1970 elections and captured the presidential post. It took the peaceful route to power, acting within the bourgeois constitutional framework.

Does this mean that revolution has no further use for force, that "midwife" without whom the founders of Marxism could not envisage the birth of the new order? That mere figures, impressive election results, can paralyse big capital and its political henchmen or bend them to the popular will? Certainly not, as the Chilean Communists are the first to admit.

To begin with, the ballot count did not decide the issue of a President right away. Since no candidate had received an absolute majority, the matter had to be settled by parliamentary decision. In the meantime, the imperialists and the local reactionaries did their utmost to blackball Salvador Allende, while the Popular Unity Party organised a campaign for a clear majority. It led the masses out onto the streets and contacted democratic groups which had not voted for Allende but might be willing to lend their post-election support. Untiring efforts met with success: the Party foiled the imperialist-reactionary plot to smother the revolution in its cradle. Be that as it may, the revolution had been launched on a peaceful footing, with what little violence there was limited to a display of mass strength and its potential threat to all those who would turn the clock back against the clearly expressed will of the majority. When the new government turned to economic reconstruction, however, the situation changed dramatically.

Since the general turn of events is well known, it is enough to highlight only those aspects of direct bearing to the present discussion. Nationalising the major copper mines, banks and a number of other enterprises was a necessary act of revolutionary violence. Without it, no other improvements could be made to benefit the people. Moreover, the actual methodology matched the aspirations of the Chilean people (otherwise there would have been no point in nationalisation to begin with). Accordingly the compensation offered the owners of the expropriated means of production was computed not only on the value of controllable investments, but also on their past profits over and above a fixed norm. The Controller General calculated the compensation sums owing to foreign concerns, while a constitutional amendment gave the President the exclusive right to decide on the total or partial deduction of excess profits (i.e. profits accruing to US monopolies as of May 1955). In the latter case, the President was also empowered to define the cut-off point between normal and excessive profits. In this way the revolution re-patriated part of the enormous profits outflow pocketed by the US multinational corporations;¹ force had been brought down on the plunderers of Chile's national wealth. The monopolists would not, of course, voluntarily submit to measures they considered a dire blow to their own interests. Excess-profit deductions from the compensation payments to the Anaconda Company and Kennecott Copper Corporation left these powerful concerns in Chile's debt. No wonder then that the monopolists put up such fierce resistance to the revolution, sparing no effort to crush it.

Clearly, revolutionary violence does not necessarily entail armed action; it can take on a juridical form to express the people's will through statutes and state directives. As a rule, it is the major property-holders who, opposing the decisions of the revolutionary government, defy the popular will and generate open hostilities. But the chief

¹ The day the major copper enterprises were nationalised, President Allende announced that between 1930 and 1970 US companies had milked Chile to a total of 1,576 million dollars in profits and 2,673 million dollars in unrecompensed export items, as against initial capital investments of 50 to 80 million dollars (Salvador Allende, *Discursos*, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, Havana, 1975, p. 131).

point, as regards the present discussion, is that even the preliminary steps of economic reconstruction for the good of the people are inconceivable without acts of violence when the economic system itself is geared to the interests of the monopolies.

The same pattern was observed in Portugal. Here too national monopolies and monopoly groups had to be stripped of their power; here too revolutionary violence was the only means to this end. Writas Carlos Costa, member of the CC Secretariat and Political Commission of the Portuguese Communist Party: "The measure [nationalisation] was prompted by the objective need to save Portuguese democracy from the danger threatening it as a result of economic subversion by monopoly capital, and to destroy the material mainstay of reaction and fascism. It became all the more imperative after attempts at a coup on 28 September 1974 and 11 March 1975, and in the light of the advancing revolutionary process and the intensifying class struggle."¹

Any attempt to refute these objective laws represents either the sincere Utopianism of those who, incapable of facing reality, brush aside the spectre of future troubles or deliberate deception, intended to disorient the revolutionary masses.

The reformists have long opposed revolutionary violence, labelling it an evil and trying to depict deeds performed by the revolutionaries in a distorted way. A central reformist doctrine prohibits forcible interference in socio-economic structures. In some cases, its advocates even invoke Marxism to maintain that no economy can tolerate violence. Does such a Marxist tenet exist? It certainly does. Marxists-Leninists believe that to ignore the laws and level of economic maturity is to condone political adventurism. Revolutionary social transformation, however, does violence not on the economy, but on those classes, social strata and institutions which artificially sustain the old production relations. There is the violent intrusion of force in the economy; while revolutionary violence is applied to "liberate" the system, achieving the optimal coordination between production relations and the productive forces at the given level of development. As for the moralists' unqualified condemnation of force *per se*, it was thrown out of court many

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 21, No. 7, July 1978, p. 36.

years ago by Engels. Consider the following excerpt from his tract on Karl Eugen Dühring:

"To Herr Dühring force is the absolute evil; the first act of force is to him the original sin; his whole exposition is a jeremiad on the contamination of all subsequent history consummated by this original sin; a jeremiad on the shameful perversion of all natural and social laws by this diabolical power, force. That force, however, plays yet another role in history, a revolutionary role; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one, that it is the instrument with the aid of which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised political forms—of this there is not a word in Herr Dühring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of an economic system of exploitation—unfortunately, because all use of force demoralises the person who uses it. And this in spite of the immense moral and spiritual impetus which has been given by every victorious revolution!"¹

Present-day critics of violent revolutionary interference in economic relations take still another line of attack. One of the most popular arguments claims that modern capitalism is so complex an organism as to preclude any revolutionary or, for that matter, any radical intrusion by virtue of its "unavoidable" destructive consequences. According to this brand of logic, no ailment in the capitalist economy can justify its revolutionary transformation which merely undermines efficiency and productivity of the society's economy as a whole. Typical of its kind is the critique offered by Paul Anthony Samuelson, a top-ranking American authority on bourgeois political economics. While Samuelson himself admits that the United States, like other capitalist countries, is in the throes of an economic crisis, he sees no call for strong measures to curb the chaos caused by private enterprise. In his opinion, such limitations can only derange existing economic ties and processes, whereas "the system has enough steam left in the boiler"² to heal itself.

Even progressive reforms within the capitalist economic structure are seen by bourgeois analysts as steps to chaos

¹ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, pp. 219-20.

² *Newsweek*, 11 September 1978, p. 50.

and breakdown. Such is the verdict passed by Jacques Chirac, leader of the French bourgeois Rassemblement pour la République on the Programme commun des gauches (the United Left Programme). The platform was patched together without the slightest comprehension of current world economic and social processes, argues Chirac. Were it ever executed, it would lead to "total disorder in the economy".¹

The present level of capitalist development, we are told, imposes an absolute choice: the economy can either operate efficiently or submit to the revolutionary transformation of its social foundations. Accordingly, or so we are to believe, the working-class movement confronts a totally new situation, radically different from that, say, of Russia in 1917. Why? Because the Russian revolution was "justified" by the economic backwardness of the country and socialising the means of production allowed the government to direct its undivided attention to developing the key branches of the economy. Thus, still following the same line of reasoning, the revolution could and did give Russia the leverage to pull out of economic stagnation, could and did lay the groundwork for a "leap forward" in economic growth. The American sociologist Daniel Bell, a prominent spokesman for the bourgeois school of thought which developed the theory of the industrial and post-industrial societies, maintains that the Bolsheviks looked up and used Soviet power exclusively in the "technocratic mode", which is to say they considered its *raison d'être* not the construction of socialism and communism, but "simply efficiency and output".² Therefore, continues Bell, Soviet power achieved no more than its historically ordained mission: it turned Russia into a country with a "modern" economy on "the Western model".

Arguments of this sort invariably conclude that the unique properties of contemporary, advanced capitalist economy oblige Communists to re-examine their revolutionary strategy, the strategy which guided the working class in its struggle to overthrow the power of capital and establish a socialist society. From every angle possible, it is emphasised that modern industrial capitalist countries have reached

¹ Jacques Chirac, *Discours pour la France à l'heure du choc*, Editions Stock, Paris, 1978, p. 55.

² Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, Basic Books, New York, 1973, p. 354.

the point in their economies' development where revolutionary transformations simply make no sense and can induce nothing but destruction and chaos in economy.

Clearly, this approach to the changing economic reality of capitalism sets the tone for sweeping and suggestive conclusions on the politics of the working-class movement. Below are a few examples. According to Alain Touraine, Director of the Centre for Social Movement Studies in Paris, the time has past for revolutionary solutions to the problems afflicting "Western society". Indeed, the problems themselves "must be analysed not from the property perspective, but rather as they reflect resource management capacities, the ability of technocrats or techno-bureaucrats to cope with enormous centralised resources and, as well, with opposition to certain practices in science, technology, information, etc."¹ In the opinion of Donald Wilhelm, an American bourgeois political economist, the high level of socio-economic development in the West reduces revolutionary communist propositions to "conceptually outmoded nineteenth-century Marxism", while the very idea of "the multinational Marxist revolution ... is losing its central dynamic and will in due course be supplanted".² To quote the French bourgeois author Jean-François Revel, in view of "the increasing complication of the social structure of societies enriched by industrial and post-industrial development", Communist Parties cannot remain revolutionary parties if they want to "blend into social democracy".³

Thus, bourgeois and reformist analysts have joined forces in a right-wing assault on communist revolutionary strategy. The working-class movement, however, must also contend with leftist groups obsessed with the notion that revolutionaries "lose face" when they show any concern for the bourgeois economy and take any steps for anything but radical change. Often, this camp attacks modern communist parties' revolutionary strategy by citing revolutions of the past, particularly the Russian developments of 1917. Here, too, the "lefts" parrot right-wing ideologists to declare that current economic problems and constructive solutions to them within the bourgeois framework, prior to

¹ *Cuadernos para el diálogo*, 13 de mayo de 1978, p. 53.

² Donald Wilhelm, *Creative Alternatives to Communism: Guidelines for Tomorrow's World*, Macmillan Press, London, 1977, p. ix.

³ *Foreign Affairs*, January 1978, p. 305.

the establishment of the working people's power, did not feature in communist revolutionary strategy to the extent they are today.

Both right-wing and "left-wing" critics, therefore, spread the notion that socialist revolutions of the past treated production efficiency as a minor issue. Right-wing theoreticians use this argument when trying to convince modern revolutionaries that the problems involved in the social reconstruction of economy require a moderate, reformist-oriented approach. In contrast, the "lefts" twist revolutionary history to claim that the problems of economic development, production, productivity of labour and the well-being of the masses must take second place to more important issues, namely the radical realignment of socio-economic relations.¹ Let us examine the real historical evidence, the revolutions of the past, both socialist and bourgeois.

The seventeenth-century English revolutionaries were once accused of wreaking economic havoc. The same charge was laid against the French bourgeois revolution at the close of the eighteenth century. The enemies of the Paris Commune went so far as to blame it for the enormous losses and famine suffered by the revolutionary city. The Great October Revolution later joined the list of the "accused". For that matter, ever before that the monarchists raised an hysterical outcry against the February Revolution, holding it responsible for Russia's economic collapse in 1917.

To be sure, revolutionary developments may engender certain economic setbacks. Consider some brief examples on the immediate "economic effect" of bourgeois revolutions. In England "the harvest of 1648 was drastically poor. Food prices soared. Political uncertainty led to well nigh total trade depression."² In France, as of 21 April 1793, the date of Louis XVI's execution, "printed currency devaluated in a steady downslide. By July of the same year it had fallen to less than 30 per cent of its face value. With no confidence in the monetary system, capital fled the

¹ The French author Charles Bettelheim offers one example of this viewpoint. In his *Les luttes de classes en URSS. Première période: 1917-1923* (Maspero/Seuil, Paris, 1974), he claims to defend "genuine revolutionary ideology" against extraneous admixtures of "economism".

² K. N. Tatarinova. *Ocherki po istorii Anglii. 1640-1815 gg.* (Studies in British History: 1640-1815), Moscow, 1958, p. 99.

country, while speculation, panic, buying and inflation soared."¹ Monetary collapse, one of the economic consequences of the American War of Independence, reached the point where "a wagon-load of money would scarcely purchase a wagon-load of provisions".²

Need we repeat that post-February Russia found itself in dire economic straits? that considerable deterioration, and not improvement, followed the October Revolution? It may also be noted that the economic picture was not exactly rosy during the popular-democratic and subsequent socialist revolutions in Central and South-East Europe. Chile's revolutionary development was not marked by smooth and steady economic growth either. And Portugal's case is one more example in kind.

What does this suggest? Is it right to maintain that revolution and economic chaos are inseparable?

First of all, it must be pointed out that this is the line taken by anti-revolutionaries who often, for that matter, oppose not revolution *per se*, but specific revolutionary uprisings. To cite but one example: prior to 1917, the SRs and the Mensheviks did not regard revolution (by which, of course, they meant bourgeois-democratic revolution) as fraught with economic devastation. Only after October 1917 did they begin to describe the socialist revolution as both the cause and the effect of economic chaos—nothing more and nothing less. And some politicians took this absurd notion seriously. It is indeed a freak of history that Alexander Kerensky, Soviet power's bitterest enemy, should have once joined the ranks of those who opposed the imperialist blockade of Russia. Judging by his articles of the early 1920s, he actually believed in his own newly-discovered "law", which read: "In a country gripped by Bolshevism the movement steadily loses support among the workers as industry recovers, as the workers consolidate their class organisation". On the strength of this "law", Kerensky argued that lifting the economic blockade from Soviet Russia would lead to "Bolshevism's downfall".³

¹ Albert Soboul, *La première république: 1792-1804*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1968, p. 61.

² J. Franklin Jameson, *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement*, Peter Smith, 1957, Gloucester, Mass., p. 62.

³ A. Kerensky, *Isdaleka. Sbornik statel (1920-1921 gg.)* (From Afar: Collected Articles, 1920-1921), Paris, 1922, pp. 44, 40.

The simple fact that Kerensky and his confederates saw their hopes dashed, that Soviet power and Bolshevism fell neither after the blockade was broken nor upon recovery and the first years of economic uplift, is a crushing rejoinder to the "revolution equals economic chaos" hypothesis.

Marxist-Leninist parties carry out a broad range of projects to ensure optimal preservation of production resources and the smooth functioning of economic mechanisms at all stages of the revolutionary struggle. Apropos of economic responsibility, history shows the proletariat to be well in advance of the bourgeoisie. The leading political activists among the working class think ahead and take pains to prevent the revolution from spilling over into anarchy and economic disruption, whereas the bourgeoisie invariably embarked upon *its* revolutions without the slightest conception of how to avoid the possibly ruinous repercussions.

To return to the Russian case: before, during and after the victorious socialist revolution, the Bolshevik Party paid particular attention to elaborating and executing organisational-economic measures to safeguard the country's industrial potential and put it to the most effective use. It is a historical fact that no party in the Russian political arena of 1917 offered a more comprehensive and profound analysis of the national economy, as well as the problems and solutions entailed, than did the Bolsheviks. The RSDLP(B) called its Sixth Congress, in July and August 1917, especially to discuss these questions. The conclusions reached and the concrete demands it formulated embodied the basic tenets of Lenin's works, the consistent, creative thrust of the economic programme he charted out for the proletarian revolution. In September and October 1917, Lenin refined its theoretical core and concrete plan of action in such classic studies as "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", "The Tasks of the Revolution", "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", "Revision of the Party Programme", etc.

Anyone who turns to these works or to the Bolshevik Party documents of the pre-October period will readily discover the deceit in the portrait of the Russian revolutionaries supposedly so intent on their political goals as to ignore social production or national economic needs.

Back in 1917, it was often insinuated that the Bolsheviks were determined to "introduce socialism by decree".

This, insisted their political rivals, would disrupt the national economy and shatter its productive forces. Bourgeois and conciliator propaganda relied heavily on this line, hoping it would discredit the Bolsheviks in the eyes of the masses.

By way of reply, Lenin wrote: "That is a lie from beginning to end No party or individual has had any intention of 'introducing socialism' by decree."¹ The Bolsheviks well realised and repeatedly stressed that the socialist transformation of Russia's socio-economic system could not be accomplished in one fell swoop, that no political strategy could handle the task "without considering the existing technical level, the great number of small undertakings, or the habits and wishes of the majority of the population".²

Again and again, Lenin and the Bolsheviks emphasised that the revolutionary proletariat and the working masses had to devote their undivided attention to the organisational and production needs of the economy. This fundamental Leninist precept is explicitly formulated in the well-known tenet on the cornerstone of the revolutionary economic programme: "The important thing will not be even the confiscation of the capitalists' property, but country-wide, all-embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their possible supporters. Confiscation alone leads nowhere, ■■■ it does not contain the element of organisation, of accounting for proper distribution."³

In other countries, in other historical contexts, the proletarian parties fighting for socialist revolution took the same approach to economic problems, showing the same concern for production efficiency. Of the Chilean Communist Party Programme and its economic revolutionary objectives under the Popular Unity Government, Orlando Milas, member of the Political Commission of the CCP Central Committee, wrote: "The battle for production will never be fought without concrete plans, definite goals and the genuine participation of the working people. When we speak of plans, we do not ■■■■ endless computations and predictions, as is usually the case under capitalist condi-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "From ■ Publicist's Diary", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 299.

² Ibid.

³ Idem., "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 107-08.

tions. We propose to draw up a plan which will include rigorously detailed targets, calculated data on production, marketing, investments, finance, manpower, labour productivity, average wage levels, export, import, social and cultural needs and the use of surpluses."¹

Revolutionaries, therefore, attribute great importance to organising the economy and boosting its efficiency—their every thought and effort is directed to this goal. Why then are revolutions attended by more or less severe economic disorder? Could there possibly be some objectively unresolvable contradiction between revolutionary social transformations and the economic efficiency of social production?

No, in and of itself, no such contradiction exists. On the contrary, as noted above, the very substance, the concrete goal in fundamental economic restructuring undertaken in the interests of the vanguard class is to liberate the productive forces from the obsolete system of production relations. Consequently, when revolution steps into the economy, it acts as a powerful stimulant to social labour productivity. Did not the bourgeois revolutions, for all the economic devastation they wrought, lay the groundwork for raising the productive forces under capitalism to levels undreamed of in the preceding, feudal epoch? And is there any doubt about the economic feats accomplished by the socialist revolutions? Did they not accelerate economic uplift and technical modernisation, did they not hoist extremely backward countries up to world standards of progress? In this light, revolutionary "interference in the economy" does not destroy, but generates its efficiency.

The above conclusion is sometimes seen, in the bourgeois press, as valid "in the long run" only, since "in the short run" revolution cannot but conflict with production interests. Nothing could be further from the truth. This alleged conflict between economy and revolution is actually the contradiction between economy and the counter-revolution.

Indeed, the dominant privileged classes have been the primary (direct or indirect) social source of economic disruption in every revolution. They were the ones to organise economic sabotage of revolutionary undertakings; it was their resistance that led to civil war; it was they who provoked and organised foreign intervention absorbing vast

¹ O. Millas, "La clase obrera en el Gobierno Popular", *Cuadernillo de Propaganda*, No. 4, pp. 14-15.

material resources and, needless to say, choking the regular course of economic life.

The entire history of socialist revolution proves that as long as the exploiting classes run the economy, they will respond to any radical economic change threatening capitalist interests by deliberately laying waste to industry, by sabotaging and demolishing economic mechanisms. No sooner does the revolution take one step forward towards restructuring social relations, than the reactionaries turn their revenge on the economy itself, seeking to drag it two steps back in labour productivity and efficiency.

In response to the October Revolution, the Russian bourgeoisie masterminded economic subversion. Prior to October, in the face of mounting revolutionary enthusiasm, it had resorted to massive industrial shutdowns and production cutbacks, engineering disorder in trade and transport. It took its slogan from the notorious threat made by factory-owner Ryabushinsky: "We'll strangle the revolution with the bony hand of famine!" But the campaign rocketed into full gear only after the revolutionary proletariat and peasantry had seized power.

Similarly, popular-democratic and socialist revolutions in Central and South-East Europe, in Asia and Cuba, encountered the economic forms of resistance from the bourgeoisie. Economic reforms launched by the popular-democratic government of Romania, for instance, were opposed by the capitalists. "As entrepreneurs, they know full well that they ought to shoot for top-capacity production," comments Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, "but political considerations and hatred for the democratic order . . . have prompted them to forgo profits and even suffer losses."¹

Or take the case of Vietnam. Victory over the American aggressors extended revolutionary transformations to the southern part of the country, where the ethnic composition of the bourgeoisie (its significant Chinese element) gave rise to peculiar forms of economic subversion. When in 1978 the bourgeoisie, fighting to retain its privileges, challenged the revolutionary government, Peking did its best to graft racial overtones onto this purely class conflict.²

¹ Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, *Artikler und Reden*, Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1955, p. 60.

² In direct collaboration with the Vietnamese bourgeoisie, China abrogated its treaty obligations with Vietnam, cancelling material

In short, every socialist revolution has encountered fierce resistance from the exploiters. Moreover, as Lenin warned, their opposition begins long "before their downfall".¹ Under no circumstances should the revolutionary forces underestimate the class instinct and "manoeuvrability" of capital. Suffice it to recall, for example, the dramatic increase in smuggling valuables abroad, mainly to the "safe" Switzerland, undertaken by the French and Italian bourgeoisie as a "preventive" subversion measure in the second half of the 1970s, when alarming left-wing political victories seemed possible.

We believe that this analysis clarifies the essential correlation between revolutionary changes in the economic system and production efficiency. We have shown that socialist revolutions must solve the problem, as the founders of Marxism put it, by increasing "the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible".² Nevertheless, this constructive reorganisation of the economy is obstructed by the exploiting classes. Objectively, therefore, revolutionaries cannot take a purely "technocratic" approach to economic efficiency. Any steps taken to reorganise the national economy and raise its efficiency are effective or ineffective in direct proportion to their success in suppressing counter-revolutionary sabotage. Which leads the working class and Marxist-Leninist parties to the following conclusion: potential bourgeois economic subversion must be resolutely and consistently restrained in order to expedite the creative economic function of revolution.

The following aspects merit special attention. First, socialist revolution aspires to transform the very foundations of society in the interests of the workers, peasants and all the working people. What they immediately gain from revolution, therefore, is not market manipulation tinged with social demagoguery, but the first conscious use of the socio-economic laws determining development prospects for the new society.

and equipment deliveries and cutting off technical assistance. These acts exacerbated the economic difficulties Vietnam had inherited from the war. Subsequently, China unleashed war against socialist Vietnam.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Fifth Russian Edition, Vol. 39, p. 458.

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 704.

Secondly, every socialist revolution, every newly-established socialist power has always had severely restricted material assets for raising the people's living standards. As discussed above, from the tsarist regime and the Provisional Government, Soviet power inherited not an economy but economic chaos, an economic system torn by war and ravaged by the exploiting classes. Poland had lost 38 per cent of its national resources,¹ Hungary the equivalent of five years' national income or 40 per cent of its national resources.² When revolutionary power came to the colonial and semi-colonial states of Asia and Cuba, it faced economies backward to begin with, and still reeling from the wounds inflicted in the military actions against external enslavement and local reaction, and from the "flight" of foreign capital. Finally—and this too has been mentioned—since young revolutionary powers the world over confronted overt and covert bourgeois sabotage on top of the economic plight left by the outgoing regimes, the productive forces did not pick up at first, but continued to decline.

This being the case, the revolutionary power's sheer determination to achieve rapid and maximum satisfaction of the masses' economic needs proved wholly inadequate for actual living standard gains. Society as a whole had to shoulder a heavy economic burden. What is more, the lion's share fell to the working people. In Russia, wrote Lenin, "it was only because of these tremendous sacrifices that the advanced workers were able to maintain their dictatorship and earned the right to the respect of the workers of the whole world. Those who are so eager to slander the Bolsheviks should not forget that the dictatorship entailed the greatest sacrifice and starvation on the part of the workers who were exercising it."³

In a society galvanised by revolutionary change, the working people rightfully expect prompt satisfaction of their vital economic interests, rise in living standards—which aggravates the issue. And it does not help matters to add the unfortunate illusion that only more equitable

¹ N. Kolomejczyk, B. Syzdek, *Polska w latach 1944-1949, Zarys historii politycznej*, Warsaw, 1968, p. 71.

² *Istoria Vengrii (A History of Hungary)*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1972, p. 503.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the First (Inaugural) All-Russia Congress of Mine-Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, Moscow, 1965, p. 499.

distribution between the haves and the havenots can solve the entire living standards problem. Certainly, this measure does boost the working people's incomes. But the economic record demonstrates that the radical solution is the only final solution: production must be organised along new, collective lines, management and planning must be exercised on the national level, and new incentives brought into play. This reflects the new economic relations which have done away with the separation of the producer from the means of production—the alienation of labour—and made the working man realise that he works for himself. To misunderstand these contingencies is to throw revolution open to an extremely dangerous consumer ideology. Chile's case points to its pitfalls.

The Chilean Popular Government and the trade unions had drawn up a programme for wage increases and price controls. A certain segment of the working population, however, continued to press decidedly inordinate demands. Though 1971 had scheduled a 40 per cent wage increase well ahead of the inflation spiral, actual increases averaged at 50 per cent, soaring as high as 100, 200 and even 500 per cent at several enterprises. Certain trade union circles, on the whole sympathetic to the Popular Government, were still unable to adjust to the qualitatively new situation; they continued to behave towards the revolutionary power as they had towards private enterprise. This tendency was exploited by the counter-revolution. Writes Gladys Marin, member of the Central Committee Policy Commission of the Communist Party of Chile: "Experience has shown that if white- and blue-collar workers lose sight of the general situation under a newly-formed Popular Government, their traditional weapons against the ruling classes—concrete demands, the call for economic improvements—can and will be turned to serve capitalist ends."¹

The same trend was observed in the strikes which swept Portugal after 25 April 1974. To meet their exorbitant demands would have meant crippling the sector nationalised by the revolution. In effect, then, the strikers played into the reactionaries' hands.

Lenin resolutely opposed any manifestation of the narrow, consumer approach to revolution and its gains. Such was his rebuttal to Arthur Crispian, the German Social De-

¹ *Los 1000 días de revolución*, p. 92.

mocrat who suggested that the Second Comintern Congress view revolution from the standpoint of its immediate impact on living standards. In Lenin's judgment, proposals of this order were counter-revolutionary since the revolution might have to demand great sacrifices of the proletariat, as had been the case in Russia; to take fright at the thought or allow it to shake one's resolve was an act worthy of the working aristocracy, perhaps, but certainly not the working class.¹

Does this mean that Leninist Communists decry the reformist appeal for "voluntary restraint" from the working class, only to reverse their position upon victory? Certainly not. In Russia, as in other countries where socialist revolutions triumphed, the working people did not raise their living standards by scrounging for sops and concessions from the exploiting classes. Instead they reorganised social production so as to cater to the economic needs of the producers themselves.

Though we have stressed the threat posed by this sort of trend for a certain part of the working people, we must point out that it is by no means a prevailing influence. There is absolutely no truth to the assertion that consumer ideals and goals alone motivate the revolutionary masses, that their revolutionary commitment is directly proportional to the poverty level, that revolutionary violence is nothing but revenge for destitution suffered. Nonetheless, such notions are widely propagated with deliberate intent.

Bourgeois and reformist ideologists draw a mechanical parallel between the workers' and all working people's commitment to revolution and their material security. They would have us believe that today the working people's relative prosperity in the advanced capitalist countries rules out their revolutionary zeal. Typical of its kind is the statement made by Sigrid Hunke in his vaingloriously titled *Das nach-kommunistische Manifest* (The Post-Communist Manifesto): "The Marxian model does not fit the changed society.... Revolution in the classic Marxian sense requires impoverished masses, an alienated proletariat ... and the pressure of economic relations ... and these no longer exist."²

¹ See V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Moscow, 1977, pp. 247-49.

² Sigrid Hunke, *Das nach-kommunistische Manifest. Der dialekt-*

Authors of the same school do not, as a rule, neglect the contrast between today's "changed" bourgeois society and the social order which gave birth to the first victorious socialist revolution. Granted, they do not sin before historical truth in maintaining that the Russia of 1917 was overrun with mass poverty, that the overwhelming rural and urban majority associated revolution with the long-sought release from interminable need and a semi-starvation existence.¹ And there is no denying the fact that working people in the modern states of developed capitalism are incomparably more affluent than they had been in pre-revolutionary Russia or in other socialist countries when their peoples fought for revolution. Now just what does this suggest? According to bourgeois and reformist ideologists, it points to one conclusion only: in contemporary developed capitalist countries, the working people are not as economically interested in revolution as were their historical counterparts in the countries where socialist revolution triumphed.

But is it true that the working class, the working people rise to revolution simply to "snatch a bigger piece of society's pie"?

The Russian bourgeoisie was not so much alarmed by wage rise demands as the workers' plain intent and direct action to seize control of the factories, secure the right to decide key economic issues and dominate the entire production management mechanism. The attitude is recorded in any number of documents. One example will suffice—a letter sent in June 1917 by the Council of Metal-Working Industry Congresses (a factory-owner association) to the ministers of trade and industry which reads: "At a general meeting, convened 11 to 16 May, workers at the P. V. Baranovsky plant resolved to elect a management and control commission with jurisdiction over the entire factory including: (1) supply and delivery of raw materials (coal, brass, copper, etc.), (2) shipment of manufactured goods (cases, piping, etc.), (3) all debit and credit, salary accounts for shop, office and technical personnel, etc. and (4) food supplies." The letter continues: "Demands of this kind consti-

tische Unitarismus als Alternative, Stuttgart, Seewald Verlag, 1974, p. 15.

¹ Notes *Time* magazine: "The Russian Empire that the Bolsheviks inherited in 1917 was a fairly primitive vastness, although some industrialization had begun" (*Time*, 14 November 1977, p. 23).

tute illegal intrusion into the sphere of purely entrepreneurial interests." And further: "This is not a question of individual enterprises. It entails the fundamental violation of the private capital principle."¹

Equally indicative is the Russian pre-revolutionary peasant movement. The peasants were not at all prepared to limit their demands to a more equitable redistribution of the end-product of agrarian labour, better land-use schemes or lower rents. All landed estates had to be transferred, lock, stock and barrel, into peasant hands—this and only this would they accept. One need only mention their massive campaign to prohibit all land transactions prior to the anticipated agrarian reform. They fought to safeguard the arable land; they fought against squandering the basic agricultural resources, or means of production.

The Russian working class, therefore, strove to take full charge of industry, while the peasantry sought the same position in the agricultural sector. In other words, both saw that their economic interests were no longer inextricably tied to salaries, incomes or bread-and-butter issues, but extended as well to revolutionising their status in the system of production relations.

The labouring masses who fought in later socialist revolutions were also determined to eliminate their subordinate position in the economy and lack of rights in the system of economic relations. This, their primary motive, stands as well authenticated fact. A key socio-psychological factor in the popular struggle against fascism in Central and South-East Europe was the conviction that after the war "life could not and must not be the same". These sentiments, revolutionary to the core, are voiced in the communist party documents which called for radical socio-economic reform and declared that the people could not and would not countenance a return to the old order.²

What is the socio-political shape of things under modern capitalism? What information does today's working-class movement provide? The workers are waging a more and more intense economic battle for better living standards.

¹ *Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii nakanune Velikoi Oktyabrskoi revolyutsii* (The Russian Economy on the Eve of the Great October Revolution), Part I, pp. 184, 185.

² Cf., for example, Klement Gottwald, *Spisy*, Vol. 11, Státní Nakladatelství Politické Literatury, Prague, 1955, p. 293.

In and of itself, this phenomenon proves that the wage rises won in endless altercations do not dampen the workers' revolutionary enthusiasm. Indeed, as the strike movement spreads, its economic and political thrust becomes more and more apparent, since the working people seek a fundamentally new socio-economic position.¹

Thus, in their effort to take full control of the economy, i.e. of social accumulation, the masses must rise to higher and higher levels of revolutionary movement. Eventually they have no choice but to demand that capital relinquish its ownership of the means of production. They must do more than demand; under the guidance of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist parties, they must apply revolutionary force in the noble ~~cause~~ of replacing the capitalist production relations with the socialist ones.

On the Threshold of Socialism

As discussed above, one of the most popular arguments against using revolutionary methods to transform society focusses on the unique features of contemporary development in capitalist economies. Two aspects stand out: first, significant growth in the state sector and secondly, labour's enhanced role—direct or indirect (via representatives, or trade unions)—in production management, in controlling certain links of the economic mechanism and acquiring shares, i.e. capital. How should these phenomena be evaluated? If the state's economic activity is cutting into the domain of private-capital relations, does this mean that capitalism is spontaneously evolving towards a socialist solution of the property problem? If the working man has won a voice in economic decision-making on certain issues, does this point to his gradually rising status within the capitalist system of production relations and to the gradual withering away of labour exploitation? Obviously the way a giv-

¹ In the developed capitalist countries workers are joining the strike movement in droves. The *World Marxist Review* presents an astounding set of statistics:

1973	17,409,947	strikers
1974	21,540,222	"
1975	24,154,765	"
1976	27,511,835	"

(Cf. *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 21, No. 5, May 1978, p. 117.) And *Rudé Právo* sets the corresponding figure for 1978 at roughly 50 million (*Rudé Právo*, 15. listopadu 1978).

en proletarian party answers these questions will largely determine its approach to social transformation.

But what, in fact, do these shifts in the contemporary capitalist system amount to? In the vast majority of industrialised capitalist countries, the railways and air lines, the power and gas industries, television, coal mining and steel smelting are totally or almost totally nationalised. The same can be said for a significant segment of the automobile and shipbuilding branches. In the developed capitalist world of the 1970s, the state sector contributed an average 20 per cent to the gross national product (discounting military equipment), though the figures vary widely from country to country—from approximately 15 per cent for the USA to roughly 50 per cent for France. Between 15 and 25 per cent of all Belgian and Dutch capital investments were channelled into the productive enterprises of the state sector; the corresponding figures for Luxembourg, Italy, France and Austria range from 26 to 35 per cent. The state held an estimated 10 to 20 per cent of all credit assets in Sweden, the USA and Japan; 50 to 70 per cent in West Germany and Italy; and over 80 per cent in Austria.

In 1977, state corporations accounted for 18.8 per cent of the gross turnover generated by the "top 50" West European companies, with state-controlled (to a mean 50 per cent capital) monopolies producing a further 18.6 per cent.

In the late 1970s, the state sector of the developed capitalist countries employed one-fifth of the economically active population (from 12.9 per cent in Japan to 33 per cent in Austria), while state enterprises took in approximately 7 per cent (1.5 per cent in the USA, 13.7 per cent in Austria).¹

On the surface, then, it would seem that the state is intruding in the property relations sphere, encroaching upon the very basis of modern capitalist economy. The working people are being "introduced" into management, which, in the opinion of bourgeois economists, illustrates the so-called expansion of "production democracy". What exactly does this entail?

In the 1960s and 1970s the working people's struggle to

¹ All figures are quoted directly or compiled from N. N. Inozemtsev, A. G. Mileikovsky, V. A. Martynov, eds., *Politicheskaya ekonomia sovremennogo monopolisticheskogo kapitalizma* (The Political Economy of Modern Monopoly Capitalism), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1975, pp. 370-75; *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya*, No. 3, 1974, p. 46, *The Economist*, 20 December 1976.

enter management moved into the forefront of the workers' trade union movement. The attending class conflicts lent "participation" appreciable socio-economic force in the West European capitalist states. Needless to say, its practical application varied from country to country: in Portugal, for example, workers' control arose in conjunction with and as the culmination of the democratic revolution; the Austrian "social partnership" system was introduced in true reformist style when the trade unions and the Socialist Party worked out an agreement with the bourgeoisie to the latter's benefit. Contemporaneous (on the historical scale) developments in other West European countries are equally diverse: the West German "Directors' Council" gave the workers "parity" participation; Holland and the Scandinavian countries devised a similar arrangement, called "production democracy"; Spain set up workers' boards, Italy the workers' shop delegates, and France factory committees.

Significantly, the "participation" struggle is continuing, its general trends being expansion and entrenchment; the workers, their representatives and the trade unions are moving into a growing number of organisational links in the economy.

Of course, the aforementioned changes in the correlation of juridical forms of ownership (i.e. the private to state ratio) and the trend towards "production democracy" affect the problematics of the class struggle, the strategy and tactics of the working-class movement. To maintain the contrary would be absurd. But the point is, what do they really signify, where do they fit in the basic structure of capitalist production and class relations, what do they have to say on the objective laws of capitalist development? How do the various ideological and political schools answer these questions?

In the predominantly social-democratic reformist wing of the working-class movement, the majority view the steady etatisation of the economy as a process which will eventually overcome the rule of private-property relations and tame the economic chaos of capitalism. The economy, in their opinion, is undergoing "socialisation", a steady evolution which involves socialisation of the means of production and redistribution of profits in favour of the direct producers (i.e. the working people).

When it comes to defining the actual mechanism of such "socialisation", however, the opinions are divided. The variety of opinion and even contradiction is immense. One faction traces "socialisation" either to economic factors which force the capitalist state to play an ever more active role in the economic processes, or to the spontaneous outcome of these economic processes. Another discounts the spontaneous origin and development theory and credits social-democrats, their newly-won positions of influence in the political administration system. The middle ground, so to speak, spawns innumerable short-lived "theoretical" constructs, all of which combine the "self-socialisation" of capitalism with the need for some form of professional or politically organised forces as catalyst.

Marxism dealt with these viewpoints over one hundred years ago. Its assessment is most succinctly presented in, for example, the following well-known passage from Engels: "Since Bismarck went in for state-ownership of industrial establishments, a kind of spurious socialism has arisen, degenerating, now and again, into something of flunkkeyism, that without more ado declares all state ownership, even of the Bismarckian sort, to be socialistic. Certainly, if the taking over by the state of the tobacco industry is socialistic, then Napoleon and Metternich must be numbered among the founders of socialism."¹

Does this mean that, in the opinion of Marxists-Leninists, capitalist etatisation, the rise of the state form of property in bourgeois society, the development of state-monopoly capitalism have nothing to do with socialist transformation of the social system? Quite the contrary. Marxism-Leninism places enormous emphasis on these processes when charting out its revolutionary strategy for the working class. Scientific communism considers them a key aspect in the maturation of the objective pre-conditions for socialist revolution. We need only recall the classic Leninist postulate: "State-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*."² Clearly, this approach insists on the most thorough analysis of any

¹ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 337.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 359.

and all shifts towards state-monopoly capitalism, whatever the national or historical context.

When modern communist and workers' parties study state-monopoly features in their particular national social and economic environments, they seek correct solutions to the problems which crop up in their day-to-day struggle. Inevitably they must determine how the capitalist "etatisation" of the economy, or capitalist nationalisation, affects the revolutionary working class. To illustrate the Marxist-Leninist approach, consider the stance taken by the Austrian Communists. Writes Franz Muhri, Chairman of the Communist Party of Austria: "The 22nd Congress of our Party (January 1974) said in its resolution: 'Nationalised industry and banking have been used to strengthen state-monopoly capitalism in Austria.' And yet, the Austrian Communists always actively campaigned for a larger state sector. Were we wrong? No, today too we insist on nationalisation of Austrian and foreign concerns and insurance companies. The 22nd Congress called for removal of monopoly placemen from the management of state-owned industry, giving the workers a share in administration of nationalised enterprises and the right of control, as part of the fight for anti-monopoly democracy, as a transition state to socialism."¹

Communists, then, pay heed to the dialectical complexity involved in capitalist etatisation or nationalisation. On the one hand, transferring the means of production from private-capital to state control is a progressive step in that it deals a certain blow to private-property relations. Even so early a form as the emergence of joint-stock capital, according to Marx, represented "the abolition of capital as private property within the framework of capitalist production itself".² Nationalisation under capitalism must evidently be seen in the same light. Indeed, it spells the historical doom of an economy based on private-property relations in letter far bolder than did joint-stock enterprise. Private capital is forced to retreat before the steady advance of the productive forces and capitalist nationalisation makes its downfall all the more apparent. In so far as it enlightens

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 18, No. 2, February 1975, p. 4.

² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 436.

the masses and dispels the myth that private capital is indispensable to the economy, capitalist nationalisation also performs a useful function.

On the other hand, whatever the causes behind its emergence and growth, the nationalised sector of a bourgeois economy is wholly bound and subservient to the capitalist economic system. To return to the joint-stock capital analogy, Marx's observation is most appropriate: "Capitalist enterprise . . . [is] essentially private even if the associated capitalist takes the place of the individual capitalist."¹

There is no more revealing an example than the case of Austria. Though it ranks as the capitalist world's most "etatized" country, its economic system is still predominantly based on private-property relations and interests. Private, or monopoly, capital still holds the upper hand in the nationalised sector; witness the big business representatives in the command posts on the Supervisory Council of the Austrian Industrial Society, the governing body for all state enterprise. Furthermore, banks and nationalised enterprises are run on precisely the same lines as any typical private capitalist firm. And finally, they offer financial support to private capital. Needless to say, far from destroying private-property production relations, this set-up enervates them in the non-nationalised sector, which accounts for over two-thirds of the gross national product and approximately 70 per cent of the economically active population. The reformist Austrian People's Party may traditionally claim that nationalisation has given the country "the germ cells of socialism", but the foregoing discussion exposes the statement as hollow pretence.

The question arises: under what circumstances can nationalisation of private property represent more than the maturation of the objective prerequisites for socialism, when does it become the direct instrument and element of socialist transformation? According to Engels, state property under capitalism does not resolve the conflict between labour and capital, but "concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution".² What does it take to turn this instrument from a formal into an efficient cause, from a potential into reality? We must first of all turn to the history of revolution.

¹ Ibid., Vol. II, Moscow, 1971, p. 248.

² Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 331.

In pre-October Russia, the "etatisation" of production had not yet evolved into full-fledged capitalist nationalisation. Socialising the means of production followed the state-monopoly capitalism pattern, as large trusts, syndicates and cartels arose and merged with state-bureaucratic establishments. When, after February 1917, the bourgeoisie and the conciliators put forth the above-discussed programme for state regulation of private enterprise, they took pains to emphasise the inviolability of the private-property principle.

At the same time, the revolutionary working class now demanded that the banks and major monopolies be nationalised. Lenin declared in his draft notes on revising the Bolshevik Programme: "*The high level of development of capitalism already achieved in banking and in the trustified branches of industry, on the one hand, and the economic disruption caused by the imperialist war, everywhere evoking a demand for state and public control of the production and distribution of all staple products, on the other, induce the Party to demand the nationalisation of the banks, syndicates (trusts), etc.*"¹

Lenin said of the Bolsheviks' nationalisation policy of the time that it was not yet socialism, but no longer capitalism, and the description fits all general democratic demands of economic restructuring. Lenin based his definition of the social essence of nationalisation on the assumption that nationalisation was possible only in connection with a changeover from bourgeois rule to the revolutionary-democratic power of the working people. State, nationalised enterprise can function, as Lenin indicated, "either in the interest of the landowners and capitalists, in which case we have not a revolutionary-democratic, but a reactionary-bureaucratic state, an imperialist republic.

"Or in the interest of revolutionary democracy—and then it is a step towards socialism."²

In Russia's case, the latter probability was purely theoretical, for revolutionary practice had immediately outstripped, or "stepped over" the relevant stage in the development of the class struggle. Instead, in the author's opinion, it is entirely applicable to most post-war people's democra-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 474.

² *Ibid.*, p. 358.

tic revolutions in Central and South-East Europe. Here the working class took the lead in nationalisation before establishing its own rule. Thus the initial phase of the campaign represented a "step towards socialism", and still "not yet socialism". At any rate, it was not capitalist nationalisation in the usual sense; its distinctly non-capitalist social content reflected the transformed nature of political power.

Or, as another illustration of the interconnection between the nature of political power and the socialisation of the means of production, its social thrust and overall scale, consider the fate of the Chilean economy before and after the 1973 counter-revolutionary coup. We have already discussed the economic measures undertaken by the newly-elected Popular Unity Government. Suffice it to stress the policy's results: it substantially redistributed income and raised the hired labour share in the consumption of national revenue from 52.3 per cent in 1970 to 62.8 per cent in 1973.¹ And what transpired after the military junta seized power?

Of the 464 enterprises administered by La Corporación de Fomento de la Producción (Corfo) in September 1973, 394 were back in private hands by the end of 1977.² Several million hectares of nationalised land were returned to their former owners. By 1976, hired labour and white-collar personnel had seen their share of the national revenue slashed to 41.1 per cent, while the property-owners' cut rose to 58.9 per cent.³ These measures, based on a concept of economic organisation diametrically opposed to the Allende government's principle of priority development in the socialised sector, struck at the very heart of economic relations. The Pinochet junta adopted an economic scheme inspired by the so-called "Chicago school" of economics, whose "social market" theory was no different from the typical private-capital model.

To sum up, the Allende Popular Unity Government clearly strove to liquidate the economic rule of the monopolies and lay the groundwork for the eventual transition to a new social order. Under Pinochet, capitalist relations were revived in a state-monopoly variant smacking, as the Chilean Communists observed, of political fascism.

The Portuguese revolution furnishes interesting and im-

¹ *Economic and Financial Survey*, 12 June 1978.

² *Ercilla*, 1 de noviembre de 1977.

³ *Economic and Financial Survey*, 12 June 1978.

portant evidence on this question. The PCP believes that remoulding the economy along democratic lines erected a "non-capitalist" type of system, consisting of "the socialised sector, nationalised or state-controlled enterprises, cooperatives and production collectives in the areas affected by agrarian reform, as well as trade and industrial cooperatives housed in formerly private small and middle-sized facilities".¹ According to the Eighth PCP Congress analysis, Portuguese economic development as a whole conforms to the laws of capitalism, but includes appreciable transitional (from capitalism to socialism) elements. To preserve this intermediary pattern, or indeed to amplify the non-capitalist orientation in the advanced sector of the national economy, declared the Congress, would depend on political rather than economic factors. It was stressed that without a revolutionary government, Portugal risked forfeiting the progressive economic achievements extending beyond the capitalist framework. The Ninth PCP Congress reaffirmed this analysis.

We see, therefore, that even at the general-democratic stage of revolution, converting the means of production into state (and likewise cooperative) property takes on a social content and thrust entirely distinct from capitalist nationalisation and capitalist cooperation, shifts in the class structure of political power being crucial. At this stage, however, socialised property does not yet define the mode of production *in toto*. What does this indicate?

A three-way comparison is called for: in objective terms, what fundamental socio-economic function does the state or socialised sector perform in a bourgeois economy, in a society undergoing general-democratic revolutionary transformations and, finally, in a society fully launched on the transition to socialist construction?

Under capitalism, the state sector is subordinated to the interests of private capital. A "mixed economy" of this type always sustains the social and economic structures which impose no restrictions on the profit motive as the prime mover in production. Consequently, the state sector acts as a prop and guarantor for the private-property basis of the entire social mode of production.

¹ *Kommunisticheskoye dvizheniye. Problemy teorii i praktiki* (The Communist Movement: Problems in Theory and Practice), Moscow, 1978, pp. 169-70.

In a society engaged in revolutionary-democratic remodelling, the state sector exists side by side with private-capitalist enterprise. It has nonetheless advanced beyond the bourgeois "mixed economy", since the socialised sector is no longer harnessed to the private-capital profit motive. Instead, its first loyalty is to the economic interests of society as a whole. While private-capital enterprise has been shorn of its former preponderance, it is in principle not only tolerated but recognised as an indispensable element of the economic structure.

Once a society has embarked upon socialist reconstruction of the economy, its socialised sector takes on the role of catalyst in reshaping the system of production relations and property relations in general. By no means does this imply that all forms of economic activity based on private-capital production and the corresponding form of appropriation are administratively "stifled". A transitional economy tolerates private-capitalist enterprise, but its relationship with the socialised sector is one of economic conflict. The limited economic cooperation observed during the general-democratic transformation period now gives way to a "who-beats-whom" relationship.

All of which demonstrates that the social essence, or position and role of the state sector in the system of property relations has little to do with its economic credentials *per se* (the branch structure of the enterprises comprising it, its share in national production, etc.). It is rather grounded in the class interests pursued by the legal owner of the nationalised means of production, which is to say the state. Or more to the point, the class which holds the reins of power will determine the social function of the socialised sector.

There is, of course, nothing new in this statement. It simply reiterates the fundamental Marxist-Leninist postulate that the class essence of nationalisation, like any collective form of property, depends on the class character of the state-political power.¹ This postulate, this insistence on the critical interaction of economy and politics in the revolutionary struggle, merits our particular attention for another reason, too, since it is often slighted or misinterpreted in today's international working-class movement.

¹ Cf., for example, V. I. Lenin, "Socialism and the Peasantry", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, Moscow, 1962, p. 312.

It has been suggested, for example, that the economy be reoriented from the profit ~~idea~~ to the immediate achievement of socially useful production and consumption goals, leaving the free-market system intact. The author finds this supposition both immature and inconsistent. In the first place, it accentuates the immediate satisfaction of social needs, all the while playing up the free-market economy which runs on profit and profit alone. This is in itself a contradiction. But let us suppose that this market economy is not so very free after all, that its freedom is substantially proscribed by the state programming and regulation which subordinates economic to social needs. Which prompts us to ask: under which conditions does a government resort to this policy? And more often than not we are told: accord, compromise and cooperation from all the diverse social and political forces. That the class nature of government must be revolutionalised is not so much as mentioned.

So complex is the government-economy interrelation in the struggle for socialism, that the revolutionary movement quite naturally turns to it again and again. And needless to say, there will always be room for new approaches, new and creative solutions. Communist parties in the modern capitalist world have a distinct advantage in that they can draw on the experience of revolutions past; they need not waste their time and energy on blazing well-marked trails, especially those that led to naught.

For Marxist-Leninist parties in capitalist countries, the history of victorious revolutions proves beyond all doubt that even the most radical appeals for the social reorientation of economic structures and development are doomed to tilt at windmills should the class essence of governmental power be left untouched. These parties are not to be side-tracked by what Lenin called a "very common" fallacy, the "bourgeois-reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is *no longer* capitalism, but can now be called 'state socialism' and so on".¹ When Communists refuse to recognise any socialist features in state capitalism, however, their criticism has nothing in common with the ideas and attitudes born of the traditional bourgeois-liberal fear of the spectre of some all-devouring state

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 442-43.

machine. For the same reason, Marxists-Leninists defy any attempt to "divorce" government as a whole from the socialist transformation of economic, production relations.

From time to time, the motley reformist crew urges the working class to adopt "production democracy" as the key note in its battleplan for socialism, to assume that every state is hostile to and will do anything to suppress its development. It is often implied that "production democracy" and workers' "participation" can be more readily attained under a bourgeois government than by socialising the means of production as stipulated in the "orthodox doctrine of socialism".

What kind of state power, works "for" or "against" the direct participation of the working people in production management and control? Which conditions influence its economic policy?

Consider the Chilean situation. Under the Popular Unity Government, the working people moved into economic helmsmanship as follows: "Supply and price control councils were extensively developed Production and defence committees sprang up in industry. The trade unions assumed a leading role in the social sphere. Gradually trade and management was transformed. People's inspectors elected by the trade unions and supply councils set up a network of communal offices for joint action with mass organisations. The United Workers' Union (La Central Unica de Trabajadores or CUT) established its councils in the industrial belts. The 1974 national economic plan was drawn up with mass participation—now a fact of life at enterprises in the state sector and the zone comprised in the agrarian reform. The Ministry of Economy signed a number of agreements with workers at several enterprises regarding the scale of production, labour productivity standards, raw material procurement, credit conditions, wage, price and investment levels."¹

The Communist Party of Chile, one of the major political forces in the Popular Unity Government, considers the working people's strides in running their own production a valuable achievement of the revolutionary period. As mentioned above, however, it admits that democratisation of the management apparatus did not go far enough. The bourgeoisie take quite the opposite viewpoint: democratisation

¹ *Los 1000 días de revolución*, pp. 65-66.

went much too far for their liking. Small wonder, then, that the fascist junta should have promptly abolished the workers' control and participation systems.

Not every state power, therefore, takes the same attitude to "production democracy".

Compare the case of Portugal. After the 1974 revolution, the workers stepped into production organisation, factory and plant control in direct response to such incidents as the mass exodus of entrepreneurs, bankruptcy declarations, industrial equipment breakdowns, embezzlement and accountancy malpractices perpetrated by the former owners, the lack or acute shortage of raw materials, subcontractors' cancellations or the administration's unwillingness to accept orders, develop new sales markets, etc.¹ Writes Alvaro Cunhal: "The responsibilities, scope and instruments of workers' control were not predetermined. They took shape in practice, as urgent measures to meet an objectively perceived situation, to defend the national economy and the right to work.... The process itself dictated that watch and control functions should evolve into management functions in order to replace a fugitive administration."²

Led by the militant trade unions of the Intersindical and the Communist Party, the working people asserted their newly-won rights to genuine participation in production management. That these rights were enshrined in the Constitution was surely their most outstanding achievement. Immediately thereafter, the bourgeoisie took one of two attitudes to the Portuguese economy's new organisational structure: "Some entrepreneurs adopted the tactics of all-out, stubborn resistance, while others endeavoured to paralyse the working-class movement, offering a joint management scheme to mislead the working people and lure them to defend the capitalist exploiters."³ The reformist socialist government set out to castrate the class essence of workers' control, the child of the revolution. It relied on the formula of "joint management" or the tried and true philosophy of "social partnership", acceptable to a certain segment of the bourgeoisie. Trotting out the usual reformist demagoguery for such occasions, it claimed to be acting

¹ Cf. A. Cunhal, *A Revolução Portuguesa. O Passado e o Futuro*, p. 78.

² Ibid., p. 80.

³ Ibid., pp. 80-81.

out of concern for the "genuine interests" of the working people. Prime Minister Mario Soares declared that radical reform of the production relations in industry "does nothing for the workers, but all too often hamstrings industrial productivity".¹ The Socialist Cabinet mounted an attack on the working people's new social-production status, culminating in the 1978 formation of right-wing "non-party" governments. Despite its constitutional recognition of this status, the government obviously intended to negate its practical impact—particularly at the enterprises returned to their former owners.² This picture, therefore, reveals a great deal on under what sort of conditions the state can and does support "production democracy", and under what sort it actually seeks to stamp the movement out.

Chile and Portugal dispel the last shreds of illusion on the question of workers' control and "participation". Both prove that "production democracy" alone cannot satisfy the vital economic interests of labour without provoking capital and the state machinery at its beck and call to vigorous counter-measures. And it scarcely changes matters to point to the various capitalist countries where lenient bourgeois legislatures have of late substantially extended workers' "participation" in production management.

Much has been done in this field in, for example, West Germany. Credit is often given not only to the trade unions and their unrelenting pressure for "economic democracy" but also to the Social Democratic Party now in power. In today's world, however, does one have to be a social-democrat or a socialist in order to recognise the worth of "participation" and work towards its introduction? We need only quote a spokesman for a government by no means "socialist", for a government as respectably bourgeois as they come: "Young people need to express themselves through their work and on their work. If our society cannot accede to their desire, their frustration will build up to the exploding point. We must therefore prepare for the future right now—without undue haste, but with resolution."³ So says Lionel Stoléru, a French government official, State

¹ Mario Soares, *Portugal: quelle révolution? Entretiens avec D. Pouchin*, p. 220.

² Cf., for example, "O PCP e a defesa da democracia face aos planos de reacção", *Avante!*, 18 Janeiro de 1979, Separata, p. 1-111.

³ *Le Monde*, 1-2 octobre 1978.

Secretary at the Ministry which, incidentally, used to be known as the Ministry of Labour, but was renamed the Ministry of Labour and Participation (*Ministère du travail et de la participation*) quite some time ago.

Nonetheless, as we have just seen, there are fairly definite limits to the bourgeoisie's consent to and interest in workers' "participation". West German capital, for instance, clearly mobilises forces to curb rather than extend "economic democracy". Public opinion is manipulated to this very end. A leading bourgeois paper writes, for example: "In the early 1920s, the prominent socialist theoretician Naftali proclaimed the idea of economic democracy an essential prerequisite for attaining the 'ideal of socialism'.

"When demanding participation in management, today's trade union leaders cite this same idea of economic democracy. In so doing, they betray a static socialist ideology which takes no account whatsoever of the changed historical circumstances."¹ What circumstances does it fail to take into account? It transpires that "in our democratic order... capitalism was overthrown long ago" and "overthrown" by virtue of the adequate participation rights accorded the workers and the trade unions in running both factories and the economy as a whole.² The paper then makes a most indicative statement: "If the majority of any nation wants socialism, it will entrust its accomplishment to the socialist political party. Democracy, however, will not tolerate this socialism's being imposed through what is essentially the back door of politics—through the trade union lobby."³

There is no mistaking the inference here. Prompted by his ingrained class instinct, the bourgeois reasons: "If 'economic democracy' gets out of hand, we'll have to take the matter up to the governmental level and we'll just see who comes out on top there." These were the very tactics adopted by the West German bourgeoisie, whose entrepreneurial associations submitted the trade unions' demands for "parity participation" in running the economy to the Supreme Court to decide whether or not they complied with constitutional property guarantees.

The following episode from the history of the Russian revolution comes to mind. Among the many West European

¹ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21. November 1978.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

social-reformists to visit Petrograd in the spring of 1917, the Socialist Louis de Brouckère arrived from Berlin. Upon taking stock of the local industrial situation, according to the Menshevik Tsereteli, de Brouckère "commented on the highly abnormal state of affairs; many plants had dismissed the entire management executive, relegating its functions to factory committees staffed by unqualified personnel and free from all responsibility for production results. De Brouckère was particularly astonished by the passive reaction of most entrepreneurs. 'Were the same to happen in Belgium,' he said, 'owners' alliances would have stirred public opinion—meaning all the other strata of the population—against the workers. But here in Petrograd the majority of the entrepreneurs with whom I have had a chance to speak, are amazingly placid'."

The Belgian Labour Party leader, Emile Vandervelde, also in Petrograd at the time, seconded de Brouckère's opinion. Both "described democratic industrial development in the West and expressed the conviction that only by embarking upon the same course could the Russian Revolution advance".² When Tsereteli passed these remarks on to Konovalov, Minister and champion of the "trade-industrial class" in the Provisional Government, the latter replied, with a troubled look: "Yes, most of our entrepreneurs have taken a fairly passive line on the workers' running the factories. But this is because they look upon it as a temporary phenomenon. They are not even overly alarmed by extremes. When it comes to legislating control and limiting their rights, I'm afraid we'll encounter much stronger opposition than our Belgian friends anticipate."³

Konovalov, as a representative of bourgeois interests, obviously assessed the situation much more accurately than did the local and visiting social-conciliators. Perhaps, as Tsereteli maintains, Konovalov "did not foresee that the entrepreneurial associations would put up such stubborn resistance to democratic industrial reforms that he himself, despite his own pro-reform sympathies, would be caught up in the movement".⁴ But beyond all doubt Konovalov rea-

¹ I. G. Tsereteli, *Vospominaniya o Fevral'skoi revolyutsii. Kniga pervaya* (The February Revolution Remembered: Book One), pp. 431-32.

² *Ibid.*, p. 432.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

lised that "production democracy" could not be separated from the question of power. Where the real stakes and inevitable outcome in the class struggle are concerned, as Lenin observed several times, the bourgeois invariably out-thinks the conciliator.

To be sure, the working class can to some degree change its status within the capitalist framework. It often achieves real improvement. Nonetheless, in the author's opinion, each gain must be judged in the light of other, more fundamental factors. In a capitalist country, "participation" inevitably involves a compromise: in settling for halfway measures, the workers indirectly recognise capital's right to decide on the main issues in production and distribution; for their part, the capitalists concede to certain limitations on the same right. The way the author sees it, it is a question of whether or not a given "participation" victory promotes activism among the working class, whether or not it becomes a springboard for further attacks on capital. In short, there is but one principal conclusion to be drawn: until such time as the basic means of production are socialised, until such time as the working class and its allies establish their own political rule, socialism does not exist. And no progressive, democratic gains which fall short of this standard can be taken as having reached the watershed between capitalism and socialism.

Marxist-Leninist parties guard the working class against the reformist illusion that "production democracy" can pave the way to socialism without touching the state apparatus, bypassing the struggle for political power. They resolutely expose all concepts which under the guise of defending their "genuine interests", their "genuine self-government" against "bureaucratic etatism", urge the working class not to concentrate exclusively on their revolutionary battle for power and the socialist organisation of economy in a new society.

We have seen that significant shifts have taken place and are taking place in contemporary capitalist production relations. These include capitalist nationalisation and "production democracy", both of which strike at the very core of these relations—the question of ownership and control over the means of production.

In the course of revolutionary development, the economic interests of all classes, social strata and groups inevitab-

ly converge on the property issue. Obviously, this cannot but exert a decisive influence on all aspects of social life (politics, ideology, etc.). To represent this process in any other terms is to deviate from Marxism. To suggest that the property struggle does not determine the policies pursued by the advocates or opponents of revolution but is instead itself shaped, in nature and intensity, by existing political forms and institutions, is to put the cart before the horse.

It has been shown that non-Marxist and anti-Marxist theoreticians, in stressing the political or ideological aspects of their "socialist models", make just this inversion. At the end of the previous chapter we noted that their common theoretical and methodological denominator is the attempt to return scientific socialism to the Utopian fold. This appraisal can now be refined. We can concretise this assessment by emphasising that, as concerns the property issue which inevitably arises on the road to socialism, any attempt to prove that class interests, clashing in this fundamental economic conflict, may be simplified and controlled with the help of moral, legalistic and humanistic incantations, is a utopia. In other words, it would mean to deduce socialist goals from theory rather than the laws of social development, to try to "realise the ideal", which was mocked by none other than Marx, who recommended the working class direct its revolutionary struggle instead to meeting the objective demands of the social progress.

Thus, property issue must be understood as the primary economic problem in revolution rather than its corollary. This is the cardinal prerequisite for the scientific approach to the ways, means, motive forces and perspectives in the struggle for socialism. For scientific socialism and for Marxist-Leninist parties it has always been the touchstone by which to gauge the feasibility and limits of revolutionary acts undertaken at various stages on the path to socialism, the key to the intricate dialectical interaction of economic and political factors setting the pace in revolution. In fact, if the economic problematics of the revolutionary struggle are wrapped in the Gordian knot of property, then the basic political aspects of the revolutionary development must of necessity also tie in. Which aspects? Replies the science of Marxism-Leninism: first and foremost, the central issue in revolutionary politics—the question of power. And this is the subject of our next chapter.

**CHAPTER
THREE:**

POWER

There is no need to reproduce the extensive argument developed by the founders of Marxism-Leninism to prove that "the passing of state power from one *class* to another is the first, the principal, the basic sign of a *revolution*, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of that term".¹ Whenever revolutionary enthusiasm mounts, the issue of power takes on an especially vital significance. Thus, it is only fitting that during the critical, event-packed months between February and October 1917, Lenin should have considered it necessary to devote so much time and energy to his *The State and Revolution*, a book which signalled a considerable advance in the Marxist science on the laws of the revolutionary struggle for working-class power. And the issues delineated by Marxism-Leninism are just as topical today, as more and more violent socio-political tremors rip through bourgeois society.

From the extraordinarily broad range of problems linked to power seizure, we shall select but a few, concentrating first and foremost on the position and role of the working class in the system of class relations. Upon analysing several aspects of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, we shall proceed to the problem of remoulding the state machinery. The chapter will close on a discussion of the consolidation of the political victory of the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Letters on Tactics", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 44.

working class and the working people, since the final solution to the problem of power lies in the irreversible entrenchment of this first revolutionary gain.

Class

Dictatorship

The historical record, past and present, confirms the classic tenet of scientific communism, formulated by Lenin as follows: "The dictatorship of a *single class* is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from 'classless society', from communism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: the *dictatorship of the proletariat*."¹

Class dictatorship is a central issue in Marxism-Leninism, in the theory of socialist revolution. For 150 years now, it has been the target of vicious bourgeois and reformist bombardment, and a stumbling-block for a certain segment of the working-class movement.

The latest round of attacks from the ideological opponents of communism is more intense, more cunning and "inventive" than ever before. The point is, in the modern capitalist world, proletarian influence is spreading into all spheres of public life and the trend is unmistakable. It shows up in the economy, too, where the working class, organised into trade unions, exerts more and more powerful pressure on entrepreneurs and governments, forcing concessions not only on wage levels, but on a number of broader economic issues as well, including price and investment strategies. Minor as these concessions may yet well be, capital rightly fears the mounting pressure of the working class. The latter's influence is now felt in the political sphere as well, particularly in the growing might of the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 413.

workers' parties, in the heavier political clout wielded by the trade unions and the closer contacts between the working-class and other mass movements. For this reason, the social role of the working class—be it hegemony or dictatorship of the proletariat—is now the subject of heated debate. Particularly noteworthy are the attempts to revise the Leninist concept of the role of the working class as hegemon, or the force which defines, leads and shapes the advance from the democratic to the socialist stage of revolution. Moreover, the very concept of working-class power is a source of confusion.

In response to all this controversy, the policy documents drawn up by the fraternal parties emphasise the special significance of the proletariat in the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society.

The laws governing the socialist construction of society, notes the Danish Communists' Programme, demand "that a conscious working class lead the people to seize power and establish their political rule".¹ The Programme of the Communist Party of the USA states: "With political power in the hands of the working people, socialism starts with nationalization of the main branches of industry and finance."² By unanimous vote at their Mannheim Congress, the West German Communists reaffirmed as their most important thesis: "The socialist order presupposes that the working class, in alliance with all working people, seize political power."³ Their colleagues in France declare the socialist goal to be unattainable without transferring political power to the working class. Georges Marchais, Secretary-General of the French Communist Party, singles out three conditions "without which socialism is nothing but an illusion or an empty phrase", the second being "the exercise of political power by the working class and more generally, by urban and rural mental and manual labourers, i.e. the social strata most interested in socialism".⁴

¹ Cf. XXV *syezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Danii*, Kopenhagen, 23-26 sentyabrya 1978 goda (The 25th Congress of the Communist Party of Denmark: Copenhagen, 23-26 September 1978), p. 142.

² *New Program of the Communist Party USA*, New York, New Outlook Publishers, 1970, p. 96.

³ "Programm der Deutschen Kommunistischen Partei", *Unsere Zeit*, 25. Oktober 1978, Dokumentation, S. 18.

⁴ Georges Marchais, *Le défi démocratique*, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1973, pp. 172-73.

The discussion must begin with an analysis of proletarian hegemony. Rather than review the broad outlines of the problem, we shall focus on three aspects directly related to the interaction of economy and politics in revolution:

(1) Is class hegemony the product of deliberate policy or is it totally independent of political will; that is, does it stem from objective socio-economic conditions?

(2) What political policy demands does proletarian hegemony make of the revolutionary proletarian party?

(3) What substance and scope can proletarian hegemony have under the economic and political rule of the bourgeoisie?

First of all, we must determine whether the hegemony of the proletariat is rooted in economy or in politics.

The inevitable corollary of capitalist development is the intensification of its basic social contradiction, that between labour and capital. For capitalism as a whole and its imperialist phase in particular, the general evolutionary trend turns this contradiction into the definitive antagonism of social life. Recent social-structural shifts in bourgeois society do not break the pattern; on the contrary, they confirm and accentuate the conflict, while the working class, the progressive, revolutionary side in this social contradiction, maintains a firm hold on its role as class-hegemon in the democratic revolutionary movement.

Several interrelated changes in the working class' status and struggle have reinforced the socio-economic base of its hegemony. These include: the number of producers alienated from the means of production is growing; the proletarian core is "condensing" as the basic and leading branches of industry absorb more and more personnel; and the average worker's qualifications and general culture level are rising to keep pace with technological progress.

It is wrong, however, to draw a mechanical parallel between the hegemony of the proletariat and the social shifts swelling its ranks in absolute terms and overall population percentages. By the same token, the working class does not automatically acquire hegemony when thrust into the front line of the class struggle (in revolutionary periods, during the years of anti-fascist resistance, etc.).

The first approach inevitably leads to primitive conclusions à la Kautsky, the sort which refuse to recognise the working class' leading role in social progress until such

time as it accounts for at least over 50 per cent of the population. The socio-economic mechanism which makes the proletariat the class-hegemon operates on laws far more intricate than rudimentary statistics. As Lenin pointed out, "the strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population. That is because the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the entire economic system of capitalism and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people under capitalism".¹

We have indicated that the hegemony of the proletariat is grounded in the heart of capitalist economy—not so much in the structural features peculiar to any given evolutionary phase, as in the basic contradiction in the capitalist system of production relations. Therein lies the objective nature of proletarian hegemony. On these grounds we can now refute the second approach outlined above, for once working-class hegemony emerges at some stage of capitalist development, it cannot disappear and reappear to match the twists and turns of political circumstance.

When the Russian Revolution of 1905-1907 was defeated, several politicians declared: proletarian "hegemony has disappeared. More: it has turned into its direct opposite." In 1911, Lenin took issue with this argument: "Even today, hegemony is a fact. The hegemony of the working class is the political influence which that class (and its representatives) exercises upon other sections of the population by helping them to purge their democracy (where there is democracy) of un-democratic admixtures, by criticising the narrowness and short-sightedness of all bourgeois democracy, by carrying on the struggle against 'Cadetism'... , etc., etc."²

From the above quote, it should be clear that constant situational changes in the class struggle neither eliminate nor generate proletarian hegemony; its political manifestation is affected in form and degree alone. In other words,

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, Moscow, 1965, p. 274.

² V. I. Lenin, "Those Who Would Liquidate Us", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, Moscow, 1963, pp. 78, 79.

from the practical standpoint, the revolutionary party is not called upon to create working-class hegemony, but to further its political realisation.

The hegemony of the proletariat left its mark on all twentieth-century revolutionary movements, irrespective of whether they transferred power to the working people or stopped short at general-democratic achievements. Not one of these revolutions could have taken a single step without the participation of the working class; had any gone against its interests, it would have foundered instantly. This is the paramount significance of proletarian hegemony in revolutionary history. Consider, for example, the first popular revolution to occur in the imperialist era, the Russian Revolution of 1905-1907. In the final analysis, it miscarried. Furthermore, though it was a bourgeois revolution in social content, the bourgeoisie did not win so much as a single political encounter with tsarism. For what meagre crumbs it did scrounge—the various representative institutions set up to satisfy its constitutional aspiration—the bourgeoisie was indebted not to itself but to the revolutionary onslaught on tsarism launched by the militant proletariat. In August 1905, for example, the bourgeoisie had been prepared to accept the Bulygin Duma,¹ the supreme representative body under the tsar, granted minimal consultative rights. It was the proletarian-inspired boycott of the elections to this pseudo-Parliament and the proletariat's nation-wide strike, which forced the government to make further concessions and agree to call another State Duma,² a more representative body with partial legislative powers.

Similarly, the hegemony of the proletariat was a decisive factor in the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution

¹ The Bulygin Duma: a project for a representative consultative assembly drafted by A. G. Bulygin, Minister of Internal Affairs, and proclaimed in August 1905, by a tsar's Manifesto. A manoeuvre calculated to split the revolutionary forces, appease the bourgeoisie and attract the peasantry, it disenfranchised most of the population. The Bulygin Duma was never convened; it was swept away by the all-Russia political strike of 1905 which forced the tsar to issue the Manifesto of 17 October 1905, promising a legislative Duma.

² The State Duma: a Russian representative legislative institution with limited rights. It was founded by the autocracy under the onslaught of the 1905-1907 Revolution to consolidate its alliance with the bourgeoisie and convert the regime into a bourgeois constitutional monarchy, leaving absolute political power in the hands of the tsar.

in Russia in February 1917. After February victory, popular democratic demands were met only in so far as the working people themselves took the appropriate measures (the proletariat instituting the eight-hour work day and workers' control; the peasants confiscating the landed estates; the people setting up their own local Soviets, and analogous acts). The conciliators' "revolutionary-democratic" policy, directed towards alliance with the bourgeoisie and the "self-restraint" of the working class, proved wholly ineffectual.

When the February Revolution fell into grave danger (leaving aside the broader implications of the Kornilov rout) only the working class was strong enough to save its gains. Several decades later, in an entirely different historical context, proletarian hegemony displayed the same vitality, when the working class stepped into the nerve-centre of the democratic anti-fascist Resistance movement. Throughout capitalist Europe, in every country which had fallen under the Nazi heel, neither the bourgeoisie nor the "middle strata", for all their active contribution to the movement, were able to take command of the freedom struggle. Instead, they had to recognise the leading role of the working class.

Proletarian, revolutionary hegemony is equally apparent in the people's democracy countries, for in each case it was the working-class movement that pushed the revolution forward and foiled the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois plots to pin it down to the shaky no-man's land of conciliation.

Closer to the present, the working class demonstrated its leading role in the socio-political process during the Portuguese democratic revolution. We need only point to the nature and thrust of Portugal's most significant revolutionary achievements. In the complex battle against the reaction, its opportunistic henchmen and their unflagging efforts to turn the clock back, the democratic forces find their most reliable support in the organised proletariat, which has considerably consolidated its position in the economic and political life of the nation. "The Portuguese revolution," writes Alvaro Cunhal, "has demonstrated anew the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist propositions on ... the vanguard mission of the working class."¹

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 1977), p. 13.

Future research into the Iranian revolution sparked in the autumn of 1978 will fully reveal the intricate social composition of the popular forces involved. Beyond all doubt, diverse class and group interests, conflicting political and religious ideas, mercenary considerations and the sincere desire to stamp out autocratic police-state practices were closely intertwined in this democratic-liberation upsurge. But it is clear even now that during the critical moments in the confrontation between the supporters of the semi-feudal monarchist regime and the popular-revolutionary forces, it was proletarian action which tipped the balance in the latter's favour. The oil-workers' strike, for example, forced the Shah and his closest circle of protégés to concede to certain popular demands. This is a striking manifestation of working-class hegemony, in the circumstances when it is scarcely possible as yet to speak of a politically organised proletariat leading the revolutionary movement.

In popular-democratic movements, therefore, proletarian hegemony is manifest primarily in the impact of the workers' revolutionary activity on their scope, force and perspectives. Though this activity can take on a spontaneous grass-roots form, it has a much greater effect on the political struggle if it is organised, if it is directed by a militant, experienced proletarian party.

We may now turn to the second question posed above: what political policy demands does proletarian hegemony, objectively the product of capitalist economy, make of the revolutionary working class' party?

The hegemony of the proletariat is the hegemony of the communist party—or so the bourgeois ideologists infer, devising a fictitious schema along the following lines: "There should be no period [in revolution] in which non-Communist parties . . . would be allowed."¹ One comment will suffice: the hegemony of the proletariat *per se*, spontaneous or politically-organised as the case may be, cannot be reduced to the leading role of the communist or any other political party. It does, however, leave its imprint on socio-political affairs, forcing all parties, communist or otherwise, to take it into consideration.

It has been insinuated that the Communists' policy orientation on proletarian hegemony represents nothing more

¹ *The Christian Science Monitor*, 13 October 1975.

than their intention to "seek domination over social forces from the very beginning".¹ This in turn is taken to indicate their alleged ingrained contempt for democracy, their perpetual refusal to recognise any ally-party as an equal partner, and so on. We should like to ask: do other parties not strive for the lead in political coalitions, do they not seek the ruling posts in government? Why are they not accused of attempting to establish their rule or suppress equality and democracy? Why are these charges reserved for those who rely on the hegemony of the proletariat, while those who would smother this hegemony run scotfree?

The answer is obvious. All such anti-communist attacks give vent to the bourgeoisie's class fear at the prospect of proletarian hegemony evolving from a latent social force, so to speak, into the full-fledged political force it becomes once the communist party assumes command of the mass democratic, revolutionary movement.

Communists put top priority into realising the full political potential of proletarian hegemony, into working through hegemony to take the lead among the progressive, democratic forces ready for joint action on common goals and interests.

As we have already proved, the hegemony of the proletariat enters the revolutionary movement not at all because it is "created", "established" or "imposed" by the Communists. Quite the reverse: as an objective temporal phenomenon, hegemony promotes the militant party of the working class to leader of all social and political forces in revolution. This is not to say that leadership falls into the Communists' lap. It must be won in battle. As the communist parties themselves emphasise, their success is closely linked to the ability to:

- assess the current situation and present appropriate initiatives meeting the demands of the broad labouring masses;

- to wage a resolute struggle for democracy and the revolutionary-socialist goals of the proletariat and all working people;

- to expose any and all deviations from democratic and revolutionary principle, to deride where necessary the opportunistic shilly-shallying of its allies.

¹ *The New York Times*, 28 November 1975.

In seeking the lead in multi-party alliances or blocs, the Communists do not in the least strive for formal recognition of this status, or try to have it "written into the protocol". As Lenin indicated, "only a petty-bourgeois huckster's idea of hegemony can conceive it as a compromise, mutual recognition, a matter of worded terms. From the proletarian point of view hegemony in a war goes to him who fights most energetically, who never misses a chance to strike a blow at the enemy, who always suits the action to the word."¹

It is also maintained that, given the contemporary forms of bourgeois democracy, the proletariat as hegemon can without revolution become the ruling class ... in a capitalist society. In the past few years this notion has attracted a certain following. But to the author's mind, it simply places the cart before the horse. Proletarian hegemony no longer determines the prospects of the democratic struggle (which will be discussed below); instead its own future is said to depend on the stability of socio-political traditions. Once you have democracy, so they say, you have proletarian hegemony.

Marxists-Leninists work on the assumption that since a bourgeois society is a capitalist order, the bourgeoisie is always its ruling class. Which brings us to the third question posed above: what meaning can working-class hegemony have, when power and ownership of the means of production remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie? Is proletarian hegemony conceivable under bourgeois rule?

Obviously, we must first make a more clear-cut distinction between the concepts of "rule" and "hegemony". Clearly, class "rule" denotes a certain class' supremacy within society as a whole, with its dominant position backed by the state apparatus; "hegemony", on the other hand, signifies the leading role played by one or another class in a specific social, political movement, be it progressive or reactionary, revolutionary or counter-revolutionary. Of course, class hegemony becomes class rule ~~once~~ the movement concerned comes to victory and changes the very social nature of power. In this way, the bourgeoisie advanced from class-hegemon to ruling class upon the triumph of the anti-feudal re-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Working-Class and Bourgeois Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, Moscow, 1962, p. 79.

volutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Similarly, the revolutions which toppled the power of capital and established socialist systems transformed proletarian hegemony into working-class rule. At the same time, wherever the popular, democratic revolutions of the twentieth century fell short of socialist transformations or generally lacked the momentum to suppress reactionary resistance, proletarian hegemony, for all its crucial role, did not put the working class at the head of society.

When the first Russian Revolution fell to defeat in 1907, the proletariat, its incontestable class-hegemon, did not become the ruling class. Nonetheless, as noted above, it did retain its hegemony in the revolutionary movement that had been forced into retreat.

The intermediary situation, such as the "dual power"¹ which emerged in the Russia of 1917, graphically illustrates the confrontation of two class-hegemonies—that of the proletariat in the revolutionary movement and that of the bourgeoisie in the counter-revolutionary movement. For a certain period it was not clear which was the ruling class. In Russia's case the question was solved only towards the beginning of July 1917, when the bourgeoisie took complete control of the government, while the proletariat retained its hegemony in revolution. The Chilean revolution reached a similar impasse when the proletariat's hegemony in the democratic movement had not yet made it the ruling class and the bourgeoisie held on to its hegemony among the counter-revolutionary forces. Since the latter lost the important levers of governmental power and key positions in the economy, it could no longer claim the dominant position in society.

How do the concepts of "rule" and "hegemony" apply to the capitalist countries where the proletariat has wrenched certain economic and political positions from the bourgeoisie? Here too confusion reigns, here too the distinction between hegemony in the revolutionary movement and rule in society has been blurred. One often reads, for example,

¹ The *dual power*: the unique and highly contradictory power system set up in Russia after the February Revolution, effective from March to July 1917, with the Provisional Government representing bourgeois power and the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies standing for the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

that the bourgeoisie now finds it more and more difficult to effect its hegemony within the democratic framework. When dealing with a capitalist society, however, the hegemon in the revolutionary movement is the proletariat, while the bourgeoisie, as long as it holds the means of production, is the ruling class and (let us stress once again) the hegemon of the counter-revolutionary forces. It is in the latter role that the bourgeoisie is now experiencing greater and greater difficulty. (We shall not examine the reasons for this; they go much deeper than the question of democracy.)

It is impossible to agree with those who suggest the proletariat should fight for hegemony in the bourgeois economic and political power structure, rather than in the democratic, revolutionary movement. In concrete terms, it is argued that transferring the state apparatus and mass media to working-class control and enhancing the workers' participation in management is a step-by-step process which will encompass, in due course, the education system, the armed forces and even the church. Eventually, we are told, a peaceful national referendum will decide on the transition to socialism, but by that time working-class hegemony in society will have made the vote a mere formality.

When setting forth this concept, bourgeois and reformist theoreticians place particular emphasis on its departure from Leninist theory and the political experience of the revolutionary proletariat. For example, Stuart Holland, a prominent ideologist with the British Labour Party, is delighted to note that the "theory of hegemony" represents "different assumptions about the nature of democratic politics, class and state power from that found in classic Leninism".¹ One difference is especially belaboured: this "theory of hegemony" posits "national consensus" as the decisive factor in the transition to socialism, whereas the "previous" concept had focussed on power seizure by the revolutionary working class.

How should we respond to this? There is no doubt that new developments introduce new elements into revolutionary theory. But what if these new factors do not promote a fresh approach, what if they revive old ideas, theses and formulae cast by the wayside of history? Surely this ques-

¹ Stuart Holland, "Social Democracy and Eurocommunism", *Socialist Affairs*, November/December 1978, p. 163.

tion must have arisen at some point during past revolutionary movements?

Under the "dual power" in Russia, the conciliatory parties, and particularly the Mensheviks, called upon the workers to "wait until they had emerged as class-hegemon in society". This idea ran through the entire political philosophy and rhetoric of the conciliatory parties. The Russian proletariat, they argued, could attain social democratisation in revolution, and nothing more. In the political sphere, which is dominated by the power problem, they stood for the strict observance of democratic norms and especially the principle of majority rule as the necessary base of power. According to the "Moderate Socialists", the Russian working masses, together with their political representatives (the selfsame Socialists) were strong enough to seize power but could not count on the majority to support them. For this reason, they concluded, the Soviets' taking power into their own hands would be tantamount to "forcibly imposing the will of the socialist minority on the nation".¹

The outcome is well known: the conciliators' waiting for the proletariat to attain "hegemony in society" contributed to the workers' losing what little power they had gained as the bourgeoisie took full control of the state-political administration. In contrast, the Bolshevik policy of developing proletarian hegemony in the revolutionary movement, of working towards its more consolidated, more goal-oriented expression, eventually transformed the working class into the state-organised, ruling class.

And so history demonstrates that to count on the proletariat's becoming hegemon in a bourgeois or even a democratic *society* rather than in the *revolutionary movement of that society* is either to confuse the concepts of "hegemony" and "rule" or to disregard the laws by which the socialist formation supplants its capitalist predecessor.

The hegemony of the proletariat can and must turn into the rule of the proletariat through revolution, not evolution. This rule will take the form of class dictatorship—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin's formulation of this historical necessity was quo-

¹ I. G. Tsereteli, *Vospominaniya o Fevral'skoi revolyutsii. Kniga pervaya* (The February Revolution Remembered: Book One), op. cit., p. 23.

ted above. As for Marx, he considered one of his chief achievements in science to be the discovery that the class struggle must of necessity lead to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*.

There is no need to reproduce in full here the passages from the "Critique of the Gotha Programme" and many other classic Marxist works pertaining to the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They are extensively quoted in any Marxist study on the position and role of the state in the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism. One comment will suffice: modern-day critics of Leninism are obviously running short of arguments if they have had to resurrect Kautsky's old thesis that Lenin introduced the "dictatorship of the proletariat" to sanction "Bolshevik voluntarism". The concept itself, say today's Kautskyites, cropped up in Marx and Engels "accidentally", it was "not part of their general theoretical system", it appears as an "occasional" and even "random" term in the works, and so on and so forth.

The run-of-the-mill bourgeois or reformist ideologist objects to the dictatorship of the proletariat by reading the term "dictatorship" in its political or moralistic as opposed to class sense. Dictatorship as they interpret it means brute force, cruel coercion and the flagrant violation of human rights and dignity. Bruno Kreisky, leader of the Austrian Socialist Party, offers one example of this line of reasoning. Appearing before an international socialist audience in the autumn of 1976, he waxed long and eloquent on the political violence perpetrated by twentieth-century police-dictatorial and fascist regimes. This he interpreted as manifesting dictatorship. "There is scarcely any doubt," said Kreisky, "that none other than Karl Marx laid the moral, historical foundation for rule by coercion, for dictatorship, when he set forth the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat."¹ There you have it! Marxism, it turns out, lends "moral and historical" sanction to such dictators as Pinochet. When serious study of proletarian dictatorship yields to semantic acrobatics, such monstrously absurd conclusions are inevitable.

Terminology, we should note, is a fairly important issue in the ideological-political struggle. Where the public at

¹ *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 4 September 1976.

large might misunderstand a certain expression, scientific precision must sometimes be sacrificed. Marxist-Leninist parties take this into account particularly where the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" is concerned. Considering the negative connotations of the word "dictatorship", they often choose different formulations to convey their concept of the class essence of the revolutionary state which carries society from capitalism into socialism. In the final analysis, "the rule of the proletariat", "the political power of the working class" and the like, may all serve the same purpose.

Most contemporary communist parties use this sort of substitute phraseology. This does not mean that they have "deviated" from Marxism-Leninism. In point of fact they are following a time-honoured communist tradition. Recall Lenin's first speeches to the masses after the October Revolution, where he simplified the Latin phrase, the scientific, historical and philosophic expression¹—the dictatorship of the proletariat. Long before that, "all the Bolshevik drafts and resolutions between 1905 and 1907 [were] based *entirely* on the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry",² even though the actual words were not used.

As an up-to-date instance, take the approach adopted by the Portuguese Communists. Alvaro Cunhal advised the Seventh PCP Congress that "we are changing several words which are perfectly correct from the point of view of Marxist terminology. No ideological considerations whatsoever influenced this decision. The main reason for these changes is that the general public does not understand certain terms the way we do. Such is the case with 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'! ... There should be no misunderstanding on this point."³

But terminology is one thing and substance quite another. The substance of proletarian dictatorship, the concept itself, it must be stressed, does not prescribe direct force, administrative coercion and the like as the only means of enforcing revolutionary state control. A sharp dis-

¹ Cf. V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Moscow, 1976, p. 420.

² Idem, "The Aim of the Proletarian Struggle in Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, Moscow, 1973, pp. 367-68.

³ *Avante!*, 21 de outubro de 1974.

inction must be drawn between the essence of proletarian dictatorship and its "dictatorial" practice. As for the latter, the concrete expression of working-class rule in society, that is, a broad range of methods—including the mildest, most "non-dictatorial" and "non-violent"—can be used to protect the workers' gains and interests. More than once, and with good reason, Lenin pointed out that "the essence of proletarian dictatorship is not in force alone, or even mainly in force",¹ that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only the use of force against the exploiters, and not even mainly the use of force".²

On the subjective level, Communists have always endeavoured to channel the proletarian dictatorship's struggle against the counter-revolution into economic or political, unarmed confrontation. It is well worth recalling, for example, that one of the first decrees (dated 26 October 1917) to be promulgated by the Soviet State abolished capital punishment. When several days later, on 4 November, Lenin addressed the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, he reviewed the French bourgeois revolution of the late eighteenth century and commented: "We have not resorted, and I hope will not resort, to the terrorism of the French revolutionaries who guillotined unarmed men."³

Though an armed uprising was involved, the October Revolution was essentially a bloodless takeover. According to the statistics available, the Petrograd insurrection counted 8 to 10 killed and approximately 50 wounded, whereas the February Revolution claimed over one thousand victims. These cold hard facts, however, did not deter the Western bourgeois press from accusing the October Socialist Revolution of needless violence. The charges date as far back as November 1917; the French right-wing paper *Le Temps*, for instance, minced no words in declaring "the second Russian Revolution more bloody than the first". Nonetheless in the same article, it betrayed its motives for

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 388.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 419.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at a Joint Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and Delegates from the Fronts, November 4(17), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, Moscow, 1972, p. 294.

twisting the truth when it ventured to hope that "the developments in Russia . . . would teach our socialists a lesson in humility".¹

During the first months of Soviet power, the Bolsheviks treated even their most outspoken and most obstinate adversaries with remarkable leniency and magnanimity. Many members of the Provisional Government were released on parole, as were the military cadets who had fired upon the revolutionary workers and peasants during the storming of the Winter Palace. The Bolsheviks and the Soviet Government were prepared to use political weapons against their political rivals—and there is a wealth of historical testimony to this fact. Indeed, Lenin continually strove, wherever possible, to reorient proletarian dictatorship from rule by force to state administration based on reorganising, re-educating and involving the masses in the running of society. Under no circumstances, however, did Lenin and the Bolsheviks so much as consider the possibility of carrying out the transition to socialism without the dictatorship of the proletariat, without, that is, the working class' indisputable rule of society.

The Russian revolutionary power had no choice but to use "dictatorial" methods: this much was obvious in the very first months of its existence. White terror had to be met with Red terror. The young Soviet state had to throw the armed might of the revolutionary people against the conspiracies hatched and the military operations launched by the internal counter-revolution and the interventionists. It had to punish the subversive activity of its bitter enemies and their henchmen by limiting or totally revoking their political rights and freedoms. Capital punishment had to be temporarily reinstated. There were no legal limits to the force wielded by the dictatorship of the proletariat during the grim years of the Civil War and foreign armed intervention. Thus, Lenin and the Bolsheviks discerned and applied the two facets of proletarian dictatorship—its forcible and creative aspects—as circumstance dictated. This is duly appreciated by many authors, both Soviet and non-Soviet. On the other hand, one often comes across the so-called "vice" theory, according to which Lenin found himself trapped between his own concept of proletarian dicta-

¹ *Le Temps*, 11 et 20 Novembre 1917.

torship and the way it was actually used. What is more, this alleged "vice" is traced not to the Civil War but simply to Russia's economic collapse and cultural backwardness. From which it is inferred that if other, more developed and culturally advanced countries proceed to socialist transition without civil war, there is no need for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Is this so?

First of all, let us turn to the historical record. The bourgeoisie of Central and South-East Europe (including such advanced states as Czechoslovakia) could not for a number of reasons escalate the class struggle into civil war, though elements of civil war were present (particularly in Poland). Accordingly, the national communist and workers' parties realised that they could establish the revolutionary rule of the working people without resorting to as many "dictatorial" measures as the young Soviet State had been compelled to use. Consequently, the East European socialist revolutionary movement was unique in that it was free to choose a different route than that taken by the Russian working class when founding Soviet power. This viewpoint, at any rate, is widely circulated.

Georgi Dimitrov in Bulgaria, Klement Gottwald in Czechoslovakia, and communist and workers' party leaders in other countries, where people's democracy has been established, have often emphasised that the special circumstances governing their particular country's revolutionary development gave rise to state power types, which differed from the Soviet Russian model in form and the balance of social forces comprising their base. In October 1946, for example, Gottwald stated: "A number of countries have set up regimes which, though not yet socialist, entail the active participation of the working classes in state administration. A new type of democracy has emerged—people's democracy. Thus, practice has confirmed what the founders of Marxism predicted in theory, that there is a road to socialism other than via the Soviet state order. Bulgaria, Poland and Czechoslovakia have chosen this route."¹

Did this alternate route conform to the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat? The majority believed, and on this point there is no lack of evidence, that the non-So-

¹ Klement Gottwald, *Spisy*, Vol. XIII, Státní Nakladatelství Politické Literatury, Prague, 1957, pp. 230-31.

viet route to socialism excluded the dictatorship of the proletariat. This viewpoint, it seems, was prompted in part by the feeling that proletarian dictatorship, the class essence of power, was "inextricably" tied to its form, to the Soviet state and the combat tactics it had had to use.

Dezső Nemes, member of the Central Committee Politbureau of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, describes how the Hungarian Communists worked out their position on this issue. In 1946, he writes, "our Party considered that people's democracy leads to socialism without the dictatorship of the proletariat It would be wrong to imagine that that position was purely tactical and served to reassure those who were sympathetic to socialism but objected to the dictatorship of the proletariat, a concept so strongly 'discredited' by anti-communist propaganda. The Party's leaders, or most of them, really believed that if the country succeeded in taking the socialist road by peaceful means, working-class power in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat would not be necessary as a means of achieving socialist goals. It was neither at the Communists' wish, nor through their fault, that events refuted the idea. In the climate of the cold war begun by the Western powers and aggravated by US atomic blackmail, at a time when internal political struggles had greatly intensified, the transition to the socialist road had to go hand in hand with consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat. For first people's democracy performs the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which it did in Hungary. Second, working-class power had introduced a system of proletarian dictatorship in the form of people's democracy."¹

A similar pattern, with specific national features of course, has been observed in Czechoslovakia.

Clearly, the entirely new set of conditions affecting the post-war revolutions presented a certain analytical challenge to communist theory. It is equally clear that the Communists displayed no "innate proclivity" for "dictatorial" forms of power. Quite the contrary: in subjective terms they tried to avoid aggravating the class struggle on the road to socialism.

The Communists were perfectly correct to conclude that their own national revolutions could consolidate their so-

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 19, No. 9, September 1976, p. 13.

cialist achievements without the degree of force which had been required in Russia, that their development would be "different". As it happened, however, the forms and methods of enforcing proletarian dictatorship were "different", but the system itself was equally imperative for all. The post-war socialist revolutions have corroborated the central Marxist tenet that during the transition period from capitalism to socialism "the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*".¹ They provide incontrovertible proof for Lenin's precept that each nation follows its own creative path in revolution, that "each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy, to some variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the varying rate of socialist transformations in the different aspects of social life".²

It is not, therefore, a matter of the economic and cultural level achieved by a particular country. The point is that the nation's economy and politics must be restructured to suit the new production relations. And this calls for the dictatorship of the proletariat—wherever socialist revolution triumphs, even in the most highly developed capitalist state.

The same applies to the so-called minority-majority "theory" which proceeds from the assumption that the capitalist state represents the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or, in other words, the minority's rule over the majority. The socialist state, on the other hand, is said to manifest the power of the majority; it has no need for dictatorship, therefore, since the exploiting minority, once stripped of governmental power, can neither influence society's development nor block socialist construction.

What do these arguments imply? What questions do they raise? First of all, to define a state as a dictatorship on the basis of the political power balance between the majority and the minority rather than on its role in the class struggle strikes us as a highly questionable hypothesis. For, of course, the bourgeois state represents the power of the minority, while the working-class state represents that of the majority. But how does one measure this "majority" and

¹ Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 26.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, Moscow, 1964, pp. 69-70.

"minority"? Obviously, on the purely theoretical level, this is a simple deduction: the bourgeoisie is always in the minority, and the working people ~~are~~ always in the majority. But what about the level of practical politics? Does not the present political power system guarantee the bourgeoisie the "support" of the majority in almost any undertaking (in election campaigns, for instance)?

The point is that the class dictatorship means securing the interests of the ruling class through governmental procedure. Therein lies its essence, and in this sense bourgeois dictatorship is always the dictatorship of the minority, while proletarian dictatorship is always that of the majority. Always, at all times, without exception, even when the majority of the population mistakenly identifies bourgeois interests as its own or, conversely, believes proletarian power to run counter to its own interests.

Consider the ~~case~~ of the socialist state which represents the clearly expressed will of the majority right from its inception. Incidentally, the proponents of the minority-majority "theory" are entirely wrong to assert that no such state has emerged to date. In fact, beginning with the Soviet state, every socialist power has arisen in this manner and no other. How the will of the majority was expressed in each case will be discussed below. For the moment we are concerned with what happened and had to happen once the working class and all working people had taken power into their own hands. The theory and history of revolution and, finally, common sense, clearly indicate that the class removed from governmental leadership invariably accords the new power a hostile welcome. Are these counter-revolutionary forces in the minority?

Let us suppose that this is the case. Nevertheless, as Lenin said, "for a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably continue to retain a number of great practical advantages: they still have money . . . ; some movable property—often fairly considerable; they still have various connections, habits of organisation and management; . . . superior education; close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie); incomparably greater experience in the art of war (this is very important), and so on and so forth."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, Moscow, 1965, p. 253.

Falling back on these advantages and their international connections, "the overthrown exploiters—who had not expected their overthrow, never believed it possible, never conceded the thought of it—throw themselves with energy grown tenfold, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of the 'paradise' of which they were deprived".¹

Hardly anyone would claim that Lenin's description of the deposed minority's counter-revolutionary potential and enterprise is now obsolete. All contemporary communist parties' policy documents and statements stress that the bourgeoisie will never renounce its privileges of its own free will; when stripped of its power, it will mobilise all its resources to regain it. As Georges Marchais noted at the Twenty-Third Congress of the French Communist Party, "this is particularly true of the French bourgeoisie. For if France has a democratic tradition, it also has the tradition of Versailles and the behaviour of those in power is a daily reminder that the latter has not died."² When estimating the balance of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces, therefore, it is not enough to point to the numerical minority of the class removed from power. The magnitude of its resources for resistance and the tenfold, hundredfold increase in its "Versailles" practices, it seems, must also be taken into account. Which prompts us to ask: what obligations does this position impose on working-class power?

And those who would exclude proletarian dictatorship from the working class' strategy in the struggle for socialism reply: the new power will have to insist, and insist relentlessly, that the choice of the majority is respected. But "to insist relentlessly" means to coerce, to impose one's will, to use one or another means of force. In other words, the new power will have to resort to dictatorial measures to cope with the malcontent exploiting minority. From this standpoint then, dictatorial forms and methods are permitted in the exercise of working-class power, while the class essence of the working peoples' state, that conveyed in the

¹ Ibid., p. 254.

² *Le socialisme pour la France*, Editions Sociales, Paris, 1976, p. 89.

concept "the dictatorship of the proletariat", is censured. Surely it is clear that this formulation distorts the true correlation between the political forms and the class essence of working-class power? It is diametrically opposed to both Marxist-Leninist theory and the record of past victorious socialist revolutions which proves that the central, definitive element in the dictatorship of the proletariat is its class content. The attending political forms and means, whatever concrete expression this content happens to take, are by no means regarded as absolute or obligatory, irrespective of the actual conditions of the post-revolutionary class struggle.

As an example of a dictatorial measure, consider the Soviet state's decision to disenfranchise the exploiting minority. Is this step imperative for every revolution? Not in the least. Recall Lenin's statement on this issue: "We do not at all regard the question of disfranchising the bourgeoisie from an absolute point of view, because it is theoretically quite conceivable that the dictatorship of the proletariat may suppress the bourgeoisie at every step without disenfranchising them. This is theoretically quite conceivable. Nor do we propose our Constitution as a model for other countries."¹ And as a matter of fact, this is the very point at which the subsequent socialist revolutions depart from the Soviet model.

It is right, therefore, to reject blind imitation of the Soviet experience in proletarian dictatorship. On the other hand, it is patently illogical to maintain that working-class states formed in national and historical contexts other than that of revolutionary Russia will suppress the bourgeois opposition but will not represent the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is sometimes asked why the rule of a single class should overshadow the interests of the other classes and social strata when, in some countries, the latter form the majority. Or, more to the point, why should the proletariat be given dictatorial powers over the rest of the population? We need hardly prove again the proletariat's special mission in the transition from capitalism to socialism. But we must emphasise that the proletariat exercises its power

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 184.

neither *against* nor *despite* all other working people but *hand in hand* with them (this point will be discussed in detail below). Any other interpretation of proletarian dictatorship is a gross distortion.

For Marxists-Leninists, the only conceivable solution to the problem of power in revolution lies in the class nature of government, in replacing, that is, one class dictatorship with another. This substitution is a qualitative landmark in the revolutionary development of a society, the prerequisite and the starting point for the immediate transition to socialism. Nevertheless, if class dictatorship is to take the national helm, it must have its own class state, a state organisation capable of safeguarding the nature of the new power and ensuring that its targets are met.

The State

"The question of the state is a most complex and difficult one, perhaps one that more than any other has been confused by bourgeois scholars, writers and philosophers."¹ Lenin wrote these words over sixty years ago, and they are just as relevant today.

While the state's functions and attributes have considerably changed over the past half-century, its essence and key objectives, as revealed by Marxism-Leninism, have remained the same.

The entire complex of problems connected with the role and place of government in society is beyond the scope of this book. We shall restrict ourselves to those aspects of direct concern to the study now widely debated in the working-class movement and other circles. The following questions are suggested. Does government retain its class nature to this day? Must the new class dictatorship alter the institutions of power and break down the state machine? What is the relationship between "political power" and "state"?

Let us begin with the first question. Of late the ideological standpoints on the class essence of government have shifted somewhat. In addition to the two traditionally opposing viewpoints--the Marxist-Leninist stance defending the universal class nature of government and its bourgeois

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 470.

antithesis—other "middle-of-the-road" trends have emerged. The proponents of one such theory concede, for example, that past capitalist states were bourgeois states, but assert that significant changes in the socio-economic structure of society and the achievements of the working people and the broad masses in preserving and developing political democratic institutions call for a totally new assessment. Another theory recognises the class nature of the capitalist state, past and present, but rejects it with regard to the socialist society to be established by the working masses since the new society will have no need for a class state power as it will express nation-wide interests right from its inception.

What reasoning supports the claim that contemporary developed capitalist states can no longer be defined as class, bourgeois states? The usual argument runs as follows: capitalist states used to function, wholly or predominantly, as political administrative and repressive orders. While state-monopoly capitalism has not abolished these functions, it has considerably diminished them to assign paramount importance to economic and social-organisational functions. In objective terms, the state has become an apparatus engaged in meeting the needs not of one class, but of society as a whole. It has assumed such responsibilities as transport, communications, power and water supplies, land management and reclamation, etc. It plays a direct and significant role in education and health services. Hence, it is concluded, the state is no longer an exclusively class institution. True, the monopolistic upper crust is still in the saddle. But all the state has to do is shake off monopoly control and it will shed its last bourgeois traits to assume, as is, a truly national character. Granted, the structure, functions and laws of contemporary bourgeois state have been partly influenced by the working people's long and relentless struggle against the power of capital. It could not but yield to this internal pressure; nor could it ignore the external impact of a consolidated world socialist community and its influence on the public. It would be a mistake to disregard these changes, that undoubtedly vary, in degree and significance, from country to country. But the essence of bourgeois state remains unchanged: obviously its primary duty is to ensure the functioning and predominance of capital. In order to understand this, one need only re-

call what was said in the preceding chapter on capitalist nationalisation. For in fact, the organisational-economic role of bourgeois state is nowhere so apparent as in the establishment of its direct control, backed by property rights, over the key sector of the economy. Every economic step it takes, in transport, power, ship-building, credit-finance, etc. is in the final analysis subordinate to the interests of capital, strengthening capitalist production relations.

To be sure, the state's economic activity does serve the needs of society. But an in-depth analysis reveals that any private entrepreneur inevitably satisfies some social demand. This is the first rule of political economics. That a particular state may assume more economic-organisational, as opposed to administrative-repressive, functions has absolutely nothing to do with its class nature.

As for liberating the state from the monopolistic upper crust, the question itself must be reformulated for greater clarity. How, in practical terms, can this be done?

Take the case of Portugal. The democratic revolution of 1974 and the subsequent revolutionary struggle deprived monopoly capital of its predominance in the economy and state alike, but only because the very system of power was radically altered, which reflected the depth of the revolutionary process. An entirely new power structure, a new form of state in other words, was required to oust the monopolies from the command positions. Nonetheless, the new government could not assert itself as a consistently revolutionary power. Even after the dismissal of the monopolistic upper crust, the bourgeoisie retained considerable influence over the state and eventually turned it around to defend private-capital interests.

From the theoretical standpoint, Portugal proves that only the revolutionary transformation of the state itself, i.e. the radical change of its essence, can wrench it from monopoly control. Which is what the Portuguese Communists are fighting for today.

Another argument against the class essence of state points to the social composition of the personnel in its apparatus. As its basic premise, it holds that any and all governments are staffed by bureaucrats, office workers and the like, ~~ex-~~cluding, under capitalism, the entrepreneur and bankers and, under socialism, "the workers and the peasants". Under modern capitalism, it is stressed, state employees are, from

the social point of view, no different from the typical hired labourers. Moreover, the gap between the real social status, income levels and life-styles of the overwhelming majority of bureaucrats and the broad working population is shrinking rapidly. This changing social composition, it is concluded, is already transforming the capitalist state to the point where it can no longer be considered the class apparatus of the bourgeoisie.

This logic is, to say the least, strange. First, state employees are said to be no more than bureaucrats. Then this definition is extended to the socialist system, to assert that its state employees are "not workers and peasants". After which an entire argument is built on the assumption that the capitalist bureaucratic apparatus is evolving into a social group no different from any other hired labourers, identical in the class sense, that is, to the workers and peasants (and, mind you, not peasant-landowners but, apparently, exploited farm hands).

But let us go straight to the heart of the matter. Of course, public servants in the contemporary capitalist system (especially the lower and middle echelons) are not exempt from exploitation. Like hired labour in industry and agriculture, in all economic sectors for that matter, they are subject to the social and economic oppression of monopolies, of capital. More and more state employees are coming to realise their common interests with the broad working and democratic masses. The swelling strike movement in their ranks was, in effect, a new phenomenon of the 1970s. On the other hand, they are still by and large a socially non-homogeneous group, with significant internal differences in political sympathies, sentiments and views.

Hence, state employees can and do represent an appreciable reserve force for the democratic struggle in the capitalist countries. But this is not what concerns us at the moment. The point is, does the "proletarianisation" of state employees change the class nature of the state itself? To claim that it does is, to our mind, just as unsound as the argument that capitalist enterprise is no longer capitalist simply because hired, exploited labour accounts for the bulk of its manpower.

State administration calls for professionally trained specialists. All things considered, even the socialist state of the workers and peasants is run by specialists who are

neither workers nor peasants in the textbook sense. But it is not their social conformation which defines the class nature of the state; quite the reverse—the class nature of the state determines their social function. A good number of bourgeois specialists worked in the Soviet state apparatus for quite some time; does this mean that the Soviet state used to be a mere seventy-five, ninety or x per cent socialist? Obviously not. One cannot, therefore, judge a given state as class-oriented or “classless” according to the social and professional break-down of its cadres, and any argument to the contrary is utterly unfounded.

Now to deal with the contention that the majority of the population, the greater part of the voters that is, is gaining more and more state power in the bourgeois-democratic political system.

The question of democracy, its role in the class society and the revolutionary struggle for socialism, will be discussed in a separate chapter. For the moment, we need only prove that democracy, as a form of political power, cannot be opposed to the class content of the state.

“The domination of finance capital and of capital in general is not to be abolished by *any* reforms in the sphere of political democracy,”¹ declared Lenin. Does this hold true to this day? Yes, it does. Marxist-Leninist parties reach the same conclusion in their analyses of present-day capitalist states. Writes Franz Muhri, member of the Austrian Communist Party: “We have a Parliament elected by universal suffrage, a pluralism of political parties, media, etc. The political administration system has all these customary attributes of bourgeois democracy Under the Constitution, Parliament is the supreme authority, a forum expressive of the sovereign will of the people. In practice, however, Parliament is increasingly becoming a formal institution. For all its decisions are predetermined by the allpowerful institutions of ‘social partnership’, composed of top officials of employer organisations, chambers of commerce, the social-reformist trade unions and the government.”² If, therefore, the bourgeoisie and the monopolies hold onto their key socio-economic positions, no democratisation can ever

¹ V. I. Lenin, “The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, Moscow, 1964, p. 145.

² *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 20, No. 4, April, 1977, p. 12.

alter the bourgeois essence of the state. This viewpoint is upheld by Communists throughout the capitalist world, in both the specific national and general theoretical contexts.

The above analysis leads to one inescapable conclusion: there are no grounds for revising the precept on the class nature of any state, capitalist or socialist as the case may be.

What lies in store for government institutions? Should the bourgeois state machine be scrapped? Before answering these questions, we must make one comment. While fewer and fewer of the latest Western publications claim that Lenin envisaged the total destruction of the old state apparatus and all forms of society's administration, it is still maintained that Lenin's views on the collapse of the state machine must be radically reappraised in line with modern developments. Right now, at the capitalist phase, say the bourgeois theorists, internal upheaval within the bourgeois democratic institutions is changing its very organisational structure, so that any day now it will be able to "slide" peacefully into the new society and serve entirely different, socialist ends. Granted, today's state machinery is extremely complex; it is now better equipped than ever before to manage economically socialised production, the end-goal of socialism. Why scrap a well-adjusted administrative mechanism, if it can be put to use in the new society? Why build a new apparatus, when the old one can contribute its expertise to the cause of the working class and the working masses? It is common knowledge that Lenin saw no need to demolish the administrative-technical apparatus of the bourgeois state and the state economic sector, that he favoured using the old specialists. Apart from writing extensively on this policy, he did all he could to put it into practice. Nonetheless, he believed that the bourgeois state apparatus "must be wrested from the control of the capitalists and the wires they pull must be *cut off, lopped off, chopped away from* this apparatus: it must be *subordinated* to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive, and nation-wide."¹ In other words, Lenin spoke of organising the economic and political administration on a totally new basis to create totally new production relations.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 106.

Upon the October 1917 victory in Russia, upon the establishment of revolutionary power in Central and South-East Europe, in Asia and later Cuba, the communist parties put every effort into delegating as much administrative authority as possible to the organs representative of the revolution rather than those related to the former, traditional power system.

Fidel Castro Ruz, leader of socialist Cuba, writes: "It must be understood that the bourgeoisie retains power not only with the aid of the armed forces but also through its monopoly of the means of production and absolute control of the nation's economic resources. It retains power through the bourgeois state with the support of international imperialism, particularly bourgeois ideology that has been implanted in the course of centuries. We therefore had to destroy the bourgeois state.... We had to abolish the bourgeois army, which we did by creating an army of workers and peasants. Moreover, we started a massive ideological battle. This took place in a country, where nearly 90 per cent of the population was influenced by bourgeois ideology, by bourgeois preachings and spread widely through the mass media."¹ In the same article, Castro states: "The masses had always regarded the state as something standing apart from them, as something alien and oppressive. After the revolution triumphed and the army of the workers and peasants was formed, the people received weapons into their own hands for the first time, won power for the first time, and saw for the first time that state institutions belonged to them and were serving their interests. Weapons were now no longer directed against the people, but were in their hands. This was one of the first blessings received by the working masses as a result of the revolution's victory."²

Yet, circumstances of the class struggle permitting, the forms and institutions of the old state order were retained. Why? Because for Communists, form *per se* has no absolute value; what is important is the class content of and functions performed by a particular state institution.

As we all know, the opposite viewpoint was often adopted by the counter-revolution. When, for example, the SRs

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1, January 1979, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

and the Mensheviks launched an open campaign against the Russian revolutionary power, they proclaimed their support for the Soviets, but... "Soviets without Bolsheviks". The German Revolution of November 1918 also founded many Soviets but, as Karl Liebknecht rightly observed, these were mere façades thrown up to disguise their actual "social content"—"bourgeois reform".¹ Similarly, when the newly-independent bourgeois Czechoslovakia, inspired by the Russian October Revolution, set up national committees, they were soon dominated by the right-wing social-democrats and transformed into organisations subservient to the bourgeoisie.

History therefore clearly demonstrates that neither retaining nor replacing the traditional forms of state administration can solve the real class issues in the problem of power. Everything depends on whose or which class interests are represented by a given state institution in the political system. Seen in this light, every victorious revolution demolishes the bourgeois state machine. And conversely, every revolution which fails to carry this historical task to completion, courts grave danger, if not destruction.

Such was the case in Chile. The revolutionary Popular Unity forces managed to seize only partial governmental power. "The popular movement won just executive power, while its opponents held on to positions of strength in the remaining branches of government, in Parliament, the courts, control and auditing commissions, etc."² And we need hardly remind the reader that this imbalance played a considerable role in the eventual defeat of the revolution.

Looking back on this lamentable experience, the Chilean Communists conclude that their revolution sorely lacked a central organisation incorporating the power of the people, the power "from below". As Jorge Inzunza, member of the CCP Central Committee writes, the main thing was "to set up the channels for expressing the popular will, effectively exercising power 'from below' and direct mass participation in building the new democracy. Without this, power 'from above' cannot carry out revolutionary counter-measures against the fierce resistance of the reactionaries."³ This ap-

¹ Cf. Karl Liebknecht, *Ausgewählte Reden, Briefe und Aufsätze*. Berlin, 1952, p. 472.

² *Los 1000 días de revolución*, op. cit., p. 82.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

proach, as the author sees it, is entirely in keeping with the precept that radical changes in the social content and structure of power are indispensable if revolution is to triumph. In fact, all victorious socialist revolutions have combined "power from below" with "power from above". And the revolutions which by and large preserved the traditional forms of state administration are no exception, for in every case organs were developed to manifest the political initiative and enterprise of the masses.

Of all the revolutions to take place in the twentieth century, not one has or could have achieved genuine transition to socialism had it spared the bourgeois state machine, the political power system created by the bourgeoisie and geared to its interests. Every popular socialist revolution, triumphant and ill-fated alike, substantiates one invariable rule: state power represents that sphere of society wherein class relations resist any and all attempts at evolutionary restructuring. There is absolutely no evidence, throughout the history of the world movement from capitalism to socialism, to support the reformist contention that a "purely bourgeois power" can evolve into a "purely proletarian power" through gradual shifts in the party composition of government, taking "as a rule . . . the form of coalition governments".¹ This concept, one actively promoted by Karl Kautsky and his followers in the Second International, is contradicted by the conduct of the reformist social-democrats themselves. Over the last fifty years their parties have headed more than one government in many a capitalist country—and not only in coalition with bourgeois parties, but very often as an absolute majority. And yet nowhere have they advanced "purely bourgeois power" so much as a single step closer to "purely proletarian power".

Scientific theory probes right into the crux of the problem: the class "purity" of power does not depend on the party composition of government, the concrete forms of state organisation or the influence of society at large. Instead, this public opinion, these forms of state organisation and this party composition ~~are~~ determined—neither mechanically nor directly, but nonetheless formatively—by the class, bourgeois nature of the state. For the state is the instrument of class rule and in this sense invariably entails

¹ Cf. Karl Kautsky, *Die proletarische Revolution und ihr Programm*, J.H.W. Dietz, Berlin and Stuttgart, 1922.

class dictatorship, i.e. the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Fighting against the progressive, left forces, this dictatorship imposes certain restrictions on the political, social and economic life of society and resorts to any means, including coercion, to protect the interests of the class it represents. What is more, as the political and social forces opposing the state consolidate and grow in strength, coercive measures will become more and more important. This is most definitely not to say that the author believes the bourgeois state to be invincible. History has raised many a socialist state to replace it; no doubt the future will create many more. But nothing will ever be accomplished without rallying the broad masses to struggle for a qualitatively new state, a proletarian state, in other words, to change the class content and structure of political power. And this can only be achieved through socialist revolution, through the establishment of the power of the working class.

This brings us to the last question posed at the beginning of this section: how is political power related to the state?

An episode from Russian history sheds light on this problem. On the eve of the Great October Revolution, the debate on the correlation between power, the state and society centred on such political slogans as "All Power to the Soviets!", "Long Live the Constituent Assembly!", "Down with the Provisional Government!", "For the Coalition Government of National Salvation!" "Down with the Coalition!", and "All Power to the Workers and Peasants!" More importantly, each slogan was formulated to voice specific views on the nature of political power and the role of the state in revolutionary development.

Consider the bourgeois standpoint. Its most consistent spokesman was the Cadet Popular Freedom Party, headed by P. Milyukov. They strove persistently, though not always effectively, to take the lead in the Provisional Government. Nevertheless, there is a wealth of evidence to indicate that the Cadets, like the Russian bourgeoisie as a whole, were not so much concerned with the actual party composition in the organs of state power as the policy pursued by this power. Capital was prepared to support any power which would protect its interests. Recall the famous formula used by the Soviet of the South-Russian Mining Indus-

trialists' Congress in its petition to the Provisional Government: "Give us good politics and we'll give you a good economy."¹ By which, as they went on to explain, they meant that Russia could count on economic uplift "only in conjunction with the overall political recovery of the country and the introduction of a law and order system backed by a strong power and guaranteed inviolability of persons and property".²

While their sole aim was "good politics" in government, the bourgeoisie and its Cadet party were rather easily reconciled to the many party shuffles which shook Cabinet of Ministers between February and October 1917; they were not overly alarmed at seeing their direct representation in the Cabinet slashed to a minimum; they supported the dictatorial pretensions of the Socialist-Revolutionary Kerensky, paved the way for General Kornilov and, though subsequently forced to denounce in public the mutiny he had staged, voiced their ecstatic approval of the rebel general.

Consequently, the bourgeoisie fully realised that it could become undisputed overlord of all Russia if, and only if, it seized political power. Having established its rule, it could afford to make room for the "moderate socialists" in the political power establishment, as it anticipated a most profitable collaboration with the SR-Menshevik bloc.

How did the Bolshevik Party propose to solve the power problem to the advantage of the workers, peasants and all working people, and the disadvantage of the bourgeoisie? The reader will recall that during the first months after the February Revolution, the Bolsheviks campaigned for the peaceful transition of all power to the Soviets. The July incidents signalled the end of the dual power and a sharp turn towards reaction, forcing them to begin preparations for armed insurrection. Once the Kornilov mutiny had been put down, they revived the slogan urging the Soviets to take power by peaceful means. Very shortly thereafter, however, they had to abandon it again, as the SR-Menshevik bloc had chosen to strike another bargain with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Once again, the struggle for working-class power had no option but to take to arms. It

¹ *Ekonomicheskoye polozheniye Rossii nakanune Velikoi Oktyabrskoi sotsialisticheskoi revolyutsii* (Russia's Economic Position on the Eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution), Part I, p. 193.

² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

was armed insurrection that brought about the October victory and solved the power problem in favour of the proletariat and the peasantry.

It must be stressed that, while the power struggle slogans changed three times during the three and a half months between July and October (which indicated a change in tactics as well), the Bolsheviks stood by one immutable principle: the class nature of political power had to be radically transformed. Needless to say, doing away with the political domination of the bourgeoisie would mean depriving the bourgeois parties of the levers of power and handing them over to the left-wing forces. This however would be nothing but a by-product of the class shift in the political power structure; and this is the crux of the matter.

And now to examine the reformists' stance on the issue of power in revolutionary Russia. In effect, they offered a "third option". It hinged on the concept of the state as a mechanism devoid of class content and hence adaptable to the interests of any social group, subject to party shuffles in government. That is, the reformists well nigh divorced "political power" from "the state"; at any rate the two concepts were seen as independent from each other. That new political forces had entered the upper houses of government was taken to reflect the revolution's impact on the national socio-economic structure, "society at large", prevailing sentiments and the like. In other words, these changes were considered external to the state administration system.

A brochure written in 1915 by Georgi Plekhanov and reprinted in 1917, outlines this concept with utmost precision. In it Plekhanov recommends patterning Russian revolutionary development on a "rising curve" (on the model of the Great French Bourgeois Revolution) rather than a "falling curve" (as had been the case in the French Revolution of 1848-1851). On the basis of such mechanical historical parallels, he sketched the following ideal scenario for a "rising curve" in the political shifts of the Russian revolution: "Power first falls into the hands of *our* 'Constitutionalists'—the left Octobrists,¹ Progressivists and Cadets. Whe-

¹ Octobrists: members of the "Union of 17 October", a party formed after the tsar's Manifesto of 17 October 1905 to represent the big landowners and the upper-crust commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. They promoted great-power chauvinism and a "strong monarchical regime".

reupon it passes to the *Trudoviks*. Finally, but only once these preliminary phases have run their full course, only once the movement has reached its broadest scale, the *most* extreme lefts will take power."¹ If this gradual leftward trend in power politics is broken, reasoned Plekhanov, if the "extreme lefts" or any party "to the left of the Cadets" should try to disrupt its ordered progression by demanding power "out of turn", the revolution will forfeit the impetus of the "rising curve" and slip down the "falling curve" until the ultra-rights eventually triumph.

As we know, these were the very tactics adopted by the conciliator faction formed by the *Trudoviks* and the parties "to the left of the Cadets" after the February Revolution. Displaying moderation and patience, they took their places in Plekhanovite queue for power. Moreover, revolutionary developments seemed to conform to Plekhanov's scheme. For in fact, each successive coalition Cabinet in the Provisional Government included more and more *Trudoviks* and politicians "to the left of the Cadets". But if we take politics rather than government composition it becomes evident that state power drifted not to the left, but to the right, generated reaction, not democracy, and promoted capitalist re-entrenchment, rather than an advance to socialism. And this glaring contradiction between the formal, superficial tokens of a leftward power shift and the rightist trend of actual government policy, explodes the reformist theories held by Plekhanov and his fellow-conciliators.

We must once again emphasise that apart from the *Bolsheviks*, the bourgeois politicians also planned and acted with an eye to the immutable laws of the class struggle, while the self-proclaimed Marxists, the "moderate socialists", simply forgot all about them. "The big bourgeoisie," noted Lenin, "differ from the petty bourgeoisie in that they have learned, from their economic and political experience, the conditions under which 'order' (i.e. keeping down the people) can be preserved under capitalism." The Russian reformists refused to even consider these conditions. They made every effort to turn the capitalist state into a tool for harmonising class interests when in fact it was and could only be an instrument geared to sustaining the capitalist

¹ G. V. Plekhanov, *Две кривые революции* (The Two Curves of Revolution), Petrograd, 1917, p. 9.

order, irrespective of the left- or right-wing shade of the parties or individual politicians in command.

These early twentieth-century politicians could look back to the previous bourgeois revolutions, and the Paris Commune. Each provides conclusive historical proof for the Marxist thesis on the class essence of any state, a thesis which warns against the illusion of mistaking political power for anything but the rule of the state-organised class. Nonetheless, this illusion did not die out. As we have just seen, it continued to fuel reformism in Russia, as well as in other countries. The stance taken by the Russian conciliators on this and, for that matter, many other issues, coincided with the views held by the right-wing and "centre" international social-democrats. But once the October victory had set society on the real path from capitalism to socialism, these concepts had to be tested in practice. What did this reveal?

It has been shown that every socialist revolution to follow the Russian Revolution of October 1917 owes its success to the class approach to the power changeover. Each conceived of the new state as a weapon to be used by the workers, peasants and all working people—the forces that assured victory. Nevertheless, as history proved time and again, placing a new party at the state helm is not enough to alter the social order.

The class struggle does not abate upon the establishment of revolutionary power. Rather it takes a radically new turn as the contestants, the exploiters and the exploited, reverse positions with respect to the state. In the struggle against capitalism and for socialism, the working people gain an enormous advantage: the state serves their interests.

Be that as it may, the entire history of socialist revolutions demonstrates that a certain period must elapse, a period of intense class struggles, before the revolutionary forces finally win power.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Constitutional Illusions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 196.

The First Task on the "Second Day"

On the "second day" of the revolution, top priority is assigned to consolidating the victory. It raises problems substantially different from those faced in the preceding phase of the power struggle and those that lie ahead, once socialist construction is actually commenced. During this period, when all efforts are directed against the threat of a bourgeois restoration, the problem of interaction between economy and politics takes on an entirely new significance.

Once state power is transferred to the revolutionary forces, politics acquires precedence over the economy. More than that, it outstrips and even seems to detach itself from the economy. While politics is henceforth determined by the fundamentally new class essence of the state, the economy, in its structure, functions and operations, remains bourgeois, exploitative. Even revolutionary decrees aimed at specific socio-economic transformations are, at first, of political consequence only; they cannot transcend politics until they have brought about real changes in the social and economic systems.

During the preliminary phase of the revolution, the economy bolsters and promotes the political demand for changing the class nature of state power. Once the revolution has been accomplished, however, a certain discrepancy or contradiction may arise between the economy and politics. From the motive power behind revolution, the economy often degenerates into a neutral force, or even a counter-revolutionary bulwark. And this is only to be expected. Taking power away from the bourgeoisie is not enough to liquidate the economic rule of capital. Even nationalising the major banks, concerns and trusts does not instantly destroy the all-embracing system of private-property relations, which inevitably become a hothouse for socio-economic interests hostile to socialism. It is precisely this phenomenon Lenin had in mind when he spoke of the economy as the chief internal enemy confronting the victorious revolution.¹

Lenin developed comprehensive theoretical guidelines for consolidating the revolutionary victory of the proletariat

¹ Cf. for example, V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 39, p. 481 (in Russian).

and all working people. In direct response to the Russian Revolution of 1905-1907 he worked out the scientific principles for safeguarding revolutionary gains against a bourgeois revival. This concept, one of his most outstanding contributions to Marxist-Leninist thought is fundamental to his theory of socialist revolution.

Revolution always runs the risk of defeat, i.e. restoration. This is such a self-evident truth that it would seem to do no more than condone political cowardice. But history convinces us otherwise. It is a moral touchstone for parties and politicians, revealing their true attitude to the interests of the warring classes, the sincerity and validity of the programmes they offer. Lenin's comment on one of the important ideological-political factors in the Russian Revolution of 1905-1907 sheds light on the class essence of the fear of restoration. "Look around!", he wrote. "Which *trend in politics* has made almost a monopoly of pointing to the danger of restoration? the Cadet trend... The Cadets have been shouting to the Social-Democrats in a thousand different sharps and flats: 'Don't touch the monarchy, for you have no guarantee against restoration. Why create the danger of restoration, the danger of reaction? Far better to strike a bargain with reaction!' This is the sum and substance of the Cadets' political wisdom, all their programme, all their tactics. And these are the logical outcome of the class position of the petty bourgeois, of the danger that democratic revolution carried through to the end represents for the bourgeoisie."¹ And in conclusion: "This argument about the absence of guarantees against restoration is... the *bourgeoisie's political weapon against the proletariat*."²

During the revolutionary turmoil of 1905-1907, Lenin refined his concept of consolidating the gains of the people's revolution in the definition of relative and absolute guarantees against restoration.

Relative guarantees, he explained, are political conditions which do not rule out the possibility of resurrecting the former, pre-revolutionary order, but simply reduce the probability—in other words, they make it more difficult to turn the clock back. As a relative guarantee available to Russia

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Report on the Unity Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Moscow, 1962, p. 338.

² *Ibid.*, p. 339.

at the time, Lenin recommended establishing the political sovereignty of the people, pursuing, that is, the consistent development of the revolutionary struggle so as to exclude any compromise with tsarism. "The only conditional and relative guarantee against restoration is that the revolution should be effected in the most drastic manner possible, effected by the revolutionary class directly, with the least possible participation of go-betweens, compromisers and all sorts of conciliators; that this revolution should really be carried to the end."¹

According to Lenin, the absolute, as opposed to relative, conditional or temporary guarantee, lay in eliminating the economic base for restoration. The reader will recall that the Bolshevik programme was calculated on the development from bourgeois-democratic to socialist revolution. The absolute guarantee, therefore, had a two-fold purpose: it was to preclude both the restoration of the autocracy and the revival of bourgeois power and rule. In this respect, it was closely linked to the transformation of the very system of socio-economic relations.

The correlation between relative and absolute guarantees for revolutionary achievements thus represents one facet of the political-economic dialectic. What practical consequences are involved?

As discussed above, politics (or power system) takes precedence over the economy in revolution. On the other hand—and this was also noted above—as soon as power passes to the working class, "political tasks occupy a subordinate position to economic tasks".² The politics-economy "hierarchy" is in a sense reversed. But not, mind you, in the simplistic sense of "once power has been taken, the revolutionary government can relax and turn to peaceful economic construction". That sort of reasoning flagrantly disregards the entire history of revolution: there is no such thing as a political lull on the "second day" of revolution, when, as Lenin observed, the class struggle reaches "the peak of fury". Conversely, if we assume that economic

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Unity Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 281.

² V. I. Lenin, "Original Version of the Article 'The Immediate Tasks of Soviet Government'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, Moscow, 1969, p. 71.

projects can and indeed must be temporarily shunted into the background in view of the ultra-tense political atmosphere, which immediately follows in the wake of revolution, then the question arises: what about the central (i.e. economic) objective of revolution? Can the new power stand firm without reshaping the economic base of society?

The correct theoretical solution to this problem, revealing the true economic-political dialectic in achieving post-revolutionary stability, is of enormous practical significance in that it helps the power of the working class and all labouring people avoid two, potentially fatal, mistakes: (1) "relaxing" its political vigilance to concentrate on economic recovery and uplift and (2) overestimating its political strength when it has actually forfeited, in this initial phase, the vital support of the economy. History proves beyond all doubt that avoiding these pitfalls grants ■ socialist revolution permanent security.

To begin with, what policy lines are adopted by the newly-established workers' and people's power? Summarising the history of revolution from the distant to the recent past yields the following policies:

- taking over the upper rungs in the state administration mechanism. This must be executed systematically and with all due speed via delegating authority to the bodies shaped by the revolutionary process, or revolutionising the class functions of the traditional state structure, or through a combination of both;

- expanding these first political achievements by creating a diversified network of local revolutionary bodies and resolutely purging the administrative-repressive apparatus (the police, the courts, etc.);

- stepping up propaganda in the armed forces so as to win the support of as many troops as possible for the revolution. In addition, the new power should create its own military support by arming the working population, forming a people's militia, workers' guards and the like;

- implementing socio-economic measures to undermine or eradicate the key positions held by big capital, industrial and financial oligarchy;

- taking steps of immediate tangible economic, social and political benefit to the working people and, above all else, promoting their participation in the administration of society and the economy;

--conducting an ideological-educational campaign among the masses so as to limit the reactionaries' opportunity for counter-revolutionary ideological work.

Of course, this list could well be extended to include the revolutionary power's first steps in the international arena. For the moment, however, we shall concentrate on the intra-national problematics of the struggle to consolidate the gains of the revolution.

Needless to say, each nation in each historical period works out its own particular blend of the policy lines described above. Nonetheless, all of these factors must be considered by every revolutionary power. Clearly, solving the problem of guarantees to prevent the old regime from rising again never follows a rigid schema along the lines of "step one: political acts to secure the relative guarantee; step two: economic measures to take care of the absolute guarantee". In practice, all these measures intertwine and overlap. Still, the general tendency for new revolutionary powers is to shift the focus, gradually, but as quickly as possible, from politics to the economy. Why? Because the situation calls for the rapid transition from a temporary, purely political guarantee to an absolute, unfailing guarantee for the new state and its revolutionary achievements.

Let us turn once again to the historical evidence.

In Soviet Russia between the Second and Third Congresses of the Soviets (between 25 October 1917 and 10 January 1918), the Council of People's Commissars¹ promulgated some 300 decrees, of which a mere 70 or so pertained to economic issues and no more than 20 introduced substantial changes into the social system and the organisational structure of the national economy. Approximately 50 decrees focussed on general-democratic reforms establishing such civil norms as equality among nationalities and equal rights for women. A little over 20 edicts dealt directly with combating the counter-revolution. At the same time, the Council issued 150 decrees wholly or partially concerned with restructuring the state-political system, setting up new administrative bodies,

¹ The Council of People's Commissars: the Soviet Government executive founded 22 October (8 November, New Style) 1917, by the Second All-Russia Congress of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Lenin was its first Chairman.

defining their spheres of jurisdiction, adapting old, pre-revolutionary institutions, etc.¹ These statistics are most revealing. They testify to the paramount role assigned to politics during the initial phase of revolutionary power. But one more comment is needed to complete the picture: even purely economic measures are, at first, of a predominantly political orientation.

To all intents and purposes these aspects were covered under the discussion of the "punitive" nationalisation with which Russia and the people's democracies launched their socialist reconstruction of economic relations. We must now refine this concept. However significant the "punitive" content of nationalisation enacted by the first decrees of the people's proletarian governments, it does far more than penalise the bourgeoisie. In every case, blocking the bourgeoisie's access to the command positions in the economy which could be used for counter-revolutionary activities, is also a primary concern. For this very reason, the Russian Leninist Party had foreseen that the revolutionary working class would have to socialise the key links in the economic mechanism in order to hold on to power. Accordingly, on the first day of the revolution, the Soviet Government took over the State Bank for, as Lenin had predicted, "the Bolsheviks have learnt something since 1841; they would not fail to seize the banks".² Even this preliminary move dealt an appreciable blow to private capital; the bourgeoisie was shorn of one of its most potent economic—and by the same token, political—levers. Shortly thereafter, the exploiters suffered still more serious losses when the citadels of capitalism fell to the "Red Guard assault" and the exploiters could no longer rely so heavily in their counter-revolutionary activities on their superiority in the material production sphere.

In objective terms, then, nationalising the means of production gave the proletarian state the foundation for transforming the entire system of socio-economic relations along socialist lines. This, in the final analysis, is its historical significance for both the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. From the theoretical standpoint, how-

¹ Statistics compiled from *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti* (Soviet Government Decrees), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1957.

² V. I. Lenin, "On Compromises", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 308.

ever, it is important to distinguish between its long-term impact and the targets assigned directly upon its execution. At that point the forms and pace of revolutionary nationalisation were dictated primarily by the need to curtail the bourgeoisie's counter-revolutionary activities and block off a potential channel for capitalist restoration. This is where most socialist states depart from the Russia's experience; they were able to effect wide-ranging nationalisation measures at the popular-democratic stage of revolution—as noted above, theirs was, for the most part, a punitive campaign against the fascists and their henchmen. Concrete historical variations notwithstanding, it is obvious that no state can ever hope to consolidate its revolutionary gains while the bourgeoisie retains its influence in the economy.

Consequently, when analysing revolutionary nationalisation, the economic aspect, that is, the construction of a new economic system, must be separated from the political aspect involved in securing the minimum, immediate and, for the time being, relative guarantee for revolutionary gains. This second aspect prevails over the first, as we have endeavoured to prove, during the initial stage in the revolutionary socialisation of the means of production.

A similar pattern is observed in the workers' control question. As noted above, workers' control represents, even before revolution, an important preliminary step for restructuring production relations. It belongs to the economic sphere inasmuch as its main function is to reorganise economic operations. Lenin, in his address to the revolutionary workers of Russia, said: "When you gather together in your factory committees to settle your affairs, remember that the revolution will not be able to retain a single one of its gains if you, in your factory committees, merely concern yourselves with technical or purely financial workers' interests. The workers and the oppressed classes have managed to seize power more than once, but never have they been able to retain it."¹ Clearly, Lenin regarded post-revolutionary consolidation as an objective requiring the workers' production organisations to incor-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Fourth Conference of Trade Unions and Factory Committees of Moscow", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Moscow, 1965, p. 478.

porate political as well as economic considerations in their strategy.

On this assumption, as early as 14 November 1917, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee¹ issued a decree authorising the workers' elected bodies (factory committees, councils of elders, economic control commissions, etc.) to participate in production management, and granting them veto powers over and above the administration.² According to the nation-wide (excluding the Urals and the Donets Basin) industrial census of 1918, 64 per cent of all factory committees and workers' control commissions had a direct say in factory management; at enterprises counting between 501 and 1,000 employees over 74 per cent of workers' control boards participated in management, and the figures rose to nearly 100 per cent for enterprises employing upwards of 5,000 men.³

In the speech quoted above, Lenin said: "Your factory committees must cease to be merely factory committees, they must become the fundamental state nuclei of the ruling class."⁴

The capitalists and factory-owners responded to the introduction of workers' control with sabotage covering well nigh every branch of industry. With the approval of the Congress of the All-Russia Union of Plant and Factory Owners (convened in early December 1917), they shut down enterprises, refused to deliver raw materials and fuel, fired workers and held back wages. The congress had urged them to take any step, up to and including shut-downs, to prevent the implementation of the Decree on Workers' Control. This prompted the Soviet Government to push full speed ahead with nationalising a number of enterprises.

¹ The All-Russia Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, the supreme legislative administrative control and regulatory body of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). It was first elected by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets (25-27 October or 7-9 November, New Style, 1917), and functioned between sessions of the All-Russia Congresses of Soviets (1917-1937).

² Cf. I. A. Gladkov, *Ocherki sovetskoi ekonomiki 1917-1920* (Studies in Soviet Economics, 1917-1920), Moscow, 1956, pp. 41-43.

³ *Istoria sotsialisticheskoi ekonomiki SSSR* (The History of the Socialist Economy of the USSR), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1976, pp. 117-18.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Fourth Conference of Trade Unions and Factory Committees of Moscow", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 477.

Both nationalisation and workers' control, therefore, comprise measures, directly concerned with the socialist restructuring of the economy as well as those designed to curb the counter-revolutionary economic potential of the bourgeoisie. Indeed, at the initial stages of all victorious socialist revolutions, it is this second aspect, protecting working-class power from the threat of a bourgeois revival, which moves into the foreground.

Consolidation being the single most urgent concern once the revolution has been won, economic measures are to be evaluated not so much for their economic substance as their political thrust. By way of corroborating this thesis, consider the founding in post-October Russia of the Supreme Economic Council (SEC).

On 26 October 1917, the day after the workers had seized power, Lenin recommended that special state administration bodies be set up to run the national economy. By early December, his plan had become a reality in the SEC, formed and empowered by decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee "to regulate the national economy and state finances".¹ Lenin had worked out the basic plan and key features of the SEC in his "Issues in Economic Politics", "Outline of a Programme of Economic Measures", and "Draft Decree on the Nationalisation of the Banks and on Measures Necessary for Its Implementation".² These articles developed the fundamental theses incorporated, even before the October Revolution, in the Bolsheviks' economic programme. Save for a few minor refinements introduced in view of the proletarian power takeover and the legislation of workers' control, the SEC was modelled entirely on this programme. The state-organised working class now faced two interconnected economic tasks: (1) it had to undertake extraordinary revolutionary measures to combat the sabotage perpetrated by the capitalists and bureaucrats and (2) in the interests of the people, it had to normalise the economy. Or, as Lenin put it, it was enormously important "to enable all citizens of the state and

¹ *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti* (Soviet Government Decrees), Vol. 1, n. 172.

² With the exception of "Issues in Economic Politics", all these works have been translated into English. See *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, Moscow, 1969, pp. 40-41, and Vol. 26, Moscow, 1964, pp. 391-94.

in the first place all the working classes to undertake this struggle under the leadership of their Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, and normalise the country's economic life immediately and comprehensively".¹

To be sure, every step taken represented both a counter-blow to the counter-revolution and a positive, constructive contribution to the new economic system. At the time, however, it was the first, essentially political, aspect which prevailed. For this very reason, Lenin insisted that "the Supreme Economic Council... be the same kind of fighting organ for combating the capitalists and landowners in the economy as the Council of People's Commissars is in politics."²

One of the most significant revolutionary economic reforms enacted by the Great October Revolution was the cancellation, without redemption, of all title deeds to landed estates. All land was handed over to the peasants, via the most democratic volost (local) land committees and the uyezd (district) Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

To a certain extent the Soviet Government's Decree on Land reflected the programmes and ideals once expounded by the SR party. By October 1917, however, the SRs (their right-wing faction) no longer supported the peasants' revolutionary demands. A bill drawn up by S. Maslov, SR party member and Minister in the Provisional Government, illustrates their shift to a rightist, pro-landowner stance, a dramatic departure from the old SR-sponsored "Composite Peasant Mandate". In contrast, the Bolsheviks were prepared to pattern the Land Decree on the "Mandate's" agrarian reform proposals, prepared, in other words, to modify their own land reform and agrarian transformation programme, even though they disagreed with the equalised land tenure scheme the entire SR party (lefts and rights alike) had so vigorously promoted among the peasants. Lenin wrote: "To prove to the peasants that the proletarians did not want to steam-roller them, did not

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Draft Decree on the Nationalisation of the Banks and on Measures Necessary for Its Implementation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 391.

² Idem, "Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, December 1 (14) 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, Moscow, 1971, p. 458.

want to boss them, but to help them and be their friends, the victorious Bolsheviks did not put a *single word of their own* into that 'decree on land', but copied it, word for word, from the peasant mandates (the most revolutionary of them, of course) which the *Socialist-Revolutionaries* had published in the *Socialist-Revolutionary* newspaper."¹

"To prove to the peasants"—what is that but a predominantly political motive? It was important to convince the peasant, the worker's chief ally in revolution, that the Bolsheviks, unlike the SRs, acted upon rather than mouthed their respect for his opinion.

In short, Lenin and the Bolsheviks understood that the revolution's immediate defense and consolidation needs would but temporarily outweigh long-term interests and projected socio-economic reforms. A new government stands to lose the majority's political support if it should neglect their economic interests. Furthermore, the sheer determination and consistency of the working class, revolutionary politics in protecting their achievements from the bourgeois-reactionary onslaught promote violent swings of opinion among the small-scale producers, the so-called intermediate strata—those objectively trapped between labour and capital. As the counter-revolution intensifies the class struggle, they over-react, lose their class bearings and blame the working-people government for material losses, sabotage and "disruptions", in a word, for all the ills bred by the bourgeois opposition.

By way of illustration, consider the socio-political behaviour of the non-proletarian, petty-bourgeois, "intermediate" strata of revolutionary Russia, nine-tenths of whom were peasants. The revolutionary working class' political majority won in October 1917 fluctuated with the petty-bourgeoisie's varying response to the political line pursued by the proletarian dictatorship (the poorest peasantry, of course, were at all times firmly allied to the proletariat).

We shall now sketch several turning points in this process.

Lenin attributed the following factors to the Bolsheviks' October victory: "(1) an overwhelming majority among the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, Moscow, 1985, p. 285.

proletariat: (2) almost half of the armed forces; (3) an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment at the decisive points, namely: in Petrograd and Moscow and on the war fronts near the centre.

"... These conditions", he added in a few lines, "could have ensured only a very short-lived and unstable victory had the Bolsheviks been unable to win to their side the majority of the *non*-proletarian working masses, to win them from the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other petty-bourgeois parties.

"That is the main thing."¹

But later on? What did this peasant and small-scale producer majority do at the subsequent critical points in the class struggle, which the revolution had brought to a head? The following example from post-October Russian history is most illuminating.

The counter-revolutionary White Guard, led by Kolchak and Denikin, had seized vast territories in Siberia, the Urals and the Ukraine where, as Lenin noted, the local petty-bourgeois peasants vacillated "at first in favour of the Bolsheviks when they granted land and when the demobilised soldiers brought the news of peace; later—against the Bolsheviks when, to promote the international development of the revolution and to protect its centre in Russia, they agreed to sign the Treaty of Brest² and thereby 'offended' patriotic sentiments, the deepest of petty-bourgeois sentiments. The dictatorship of the proletariat was particularly displeasing to the peasants in those places where there were the largest stocks of surplus grain, when the Bolsheviks showed that they would strictly and firmly

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 282.

² On 3 March 1918, in the city of Brest-Litovsk (now Brest), Russia signed the Treaty of Brest with Germany, Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. Soviet Russia's domestic and international position left it no alternative but to end the war. The national economy was in ruins, the old army has disintegrated, and the new workers' and peasants' army had yet to muster fighting strength. The people demanded peace. Despite the stiff conditions imposed by the German bloc, Lenin considered the treaty imperative; it would give the country the breathing-space it needed to consolidate the gains of the October Revolution, stabilise Soviet power, organise the Red Army and resurrect the war-torn economy. When Kaiser Wilhelm II was overthrown by the revolution of November 1918, the Soviet Government annulled the Brest Treaty.

secure the transfer of those surplus stocks to the state at fixed prices."¹

Thus, just as Lenin had predicted in 1906, the petty-bourgeois masses (for the most part, peasants) joined the workers to overthrow the bourgeois-landowner regime, only to falter and even recoil from the revolution when the proletariat surged ahead with uncompromising measures to defend and realise its class interests.

This is not to say that "the dictatorship of the proletariat was not to the peasants' liking". Indeed, a first-hand look at the Kolchak and Denikin hordes convinced the peasants that they would reinstate a bourgeois-landowner rule. It now became clearer to them who was their natural class ally and who their enemy. Credit goes to the Leninist Party's judicious policy line on wresting the middle-strata peasantry from the rural bourgeoisie's influence, developed at the Eighth R.C.P.(B) Congress. Lenin wrote: "Another turn towards Bolshevism began and peasant revolts spread in the rear of Kolchak and Denikin. The peasants welcomed the Red troops as liberators."² And he concluded: "In the long run, it was this vacillation of the peasantry, the main body of the petty-bourgeois working people, that decided the fate of Soviet rule and of the rule of Kolchak and Denikin."³

Thus, as long as working-class power hangs on the vacillations of the petty-bourgeois masses, its revolutionary gains cannot be considered irreversible. And no political measure, nothing short of profound socio-economic transformation, can eliminate this syndrome.

Analysing the Russian post-October consolidation struggle suggests two basic policy orientations to be adopted by proletarian dictatorships desiring to win over the "intermediate", petty-bourgeois masses and secure their recognition of working-class hegemony.

Policy number one, and the key to victory: displace the exploiters, undermine their economic might and demolish the bourgeois socio-economic system. This dramatically weakens the magnetic attraction of bourgeois ideology for

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 268.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

the property owner who lurks in the heart of every petty-bourgeois. For, as Lenin said: "By its struggle, its revolutionary struggle, the proletariat *destroys* capitalist property relations, ergo, the capitalist determinants (and motivations) of will and decision-making for the vacillating elements."¹

Policy number two: find the concrete forms of economic transformation closest to the cultural aspirations and economic interests of the petty-bourgeois, "intermediate" strata and population groups.

In fact, these very policies shaped the consolidation struggle in a number of countries where the working people were able to seize and hold on to political power.

Czechoslovakia is a case in point. Klement Gottwald outlined the essential features of the CPC policy adopted after February 1948 as follows: "The aim was to stabilise, consolidate and secure the February victory against attack. One of the most important strategic conclusions to be drawn from Lenin's writings on the class struggle indicates that newly-won positions must be well fortified and firmly entrenched before the revolution can move on."² Gottwald then described the basic policy lines adopted to this end, with particular emphasis on phase two in the industrial nationalisation campaign and the second land reform. These very measures, on the one hand, undermined the economic position of the rural and urban exploiting classes and, on the other, secured the proletarian party its "most potent capital", "the confidence of the masses".³

Since the Czechoslovakian revolution had by that point taken on a socialist orientation, we may define the revolutionary government's basic policy thrust as establishing the absolute guarantee against bourgeois restoration. The same can be said for Bulgaria, where the uprising of September 1944 signalled the dawn of socialist revolution. Right from the start, the Bulgarian Communists (known at the time as the Workers' Party) based their consolidation struggle on promoting stronger ties between the proletariat and the peasantry. When "defending and reinforcing

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 39, p. 457 (in Russian).

² Klement Gottwald, *Výbor z díla*, Vol. II, Svoboda, Prague, 1971, p. 343.

³ *Ibid.*

ing the victory of 9 September"¹ was a top-priority concern, the BCP modelled its policy both on the Bolshevik experience and the conclusions it had drawn from its own history, particularly its critical reappraisal of the 1923 armed insurrection. At that time, it had failed to appreciate the decisive significance of a proletarian-peasant class alliance and so had mistakenly adopted a "neutral" stance in the battle between the bourgeois ultra-reactionaries and the peasantry.

The proletarian-peasant alliance formed the nucleus of the nation-wide union of popular-democratic forces required not only for the total rout of fascism in Bulgaria but for consolidating the first gains of the socialist revolution. Policy action towards this union "was the preliminary prerequisite and guarantee for preserving and advancing the historical achievements of the people's uprising of 9 September".²

As we see, the East European communist parties grasped the essential features of the Bolshevik struggle to build on the achievements of the February Revolution and, subsequently, to consolidate their October victory. In other words, their policy incorporated the universal revolutionary strategy of securing guarantees against restoration. It was by no means exclusively dependent on favourable international factors (including, of particular note, the Soviet Army's considerable presence in Central and South-East Europe). Without discounting this historical circumstance and its propitious impact on the popular-democratic revolutions, it must be stressed that the national communist parties, in seeking anti-restoration guarantees, concentrated on rallying their internal forces to back the popular-democratic and socialist platform. To this end, they strove to ensure that the majority, including the petty bourgeoisie, should find their real economic interests tied to the new social order.

Even the revolutions which sustained defeat can contribute a great deal to understanding the correlation between the economy and politics in the struggle to entrench working-class power.

¹ G. Dimitrov, *Isbrannnye statyi i rechi* (Selected Articles and Speeches), Moscow, 1972, p. 349.

² Cf. *Ibid.*

The ill-fated Hungarian proletarian revolution of 1919 offers an especially interesting example. As the Hungarian Communists are the first to admit, the events which led to the downfall of their Soviet Republic demonstrate that the newly-established proletarian power was gravely mistaken in its stance on the peasant question. On 3 April 1919, the Hungarian Soviet Government decreed that all large and medium-sized estates and holdings, including all movable and immovable property, were to be transferred, without compensation, to the state. On paper, these nationalised lands were to be handed over to agricultural cooperatives. In actual fact, the former stewards or owners were left in control, while the peasantry, who expected the new government to give them land above all else, was left landless. And the Soviet Republic of Hungary suffered the political consequences of this oversight when, at the critical point, the proletariat lost the vital support of the peasant masses.

Writing after the fact, Béla Kun observed that "a large segment of the working masses failed to understand that without satisfying the peasantry—as only land redistribution could have done—the numerically inferior proletariat could not hold on to power in the battle against its internal and external enemies. Instead of a proletarian-peasant alliance concluded in the interests of the revolution, a rift opened up between the workers and peasants, to the irreparable detriment of the revolution. The misunderstanding over NEP [the New Economic Policy] affecting but a minor faction of the Communist Party in Russia, swelled to massive proportions in Hungary. Which is why we failed to activate, let alone neutralise, the broad strata of the peasantry in the interests of the revolution."¹ And Kun concludes: "This is the second most important lesson to be drawn from the Hungarian proletarian revolution."²

Though the Hungarian revolutionaries had also made political mistakes, this economic error was considered, as we have seen, their most serious.

Closer to the present, Chile drew the attention of the progressive public throughout the world to the question of

¹ Béla Kun, *La République Hongroise des Conseils*, Editions Corvina, Budapest, 1962, p. 331.

² *Ibid.*, p. 332.

stability guarantees for revolutionary victory. We have already discussed the downfall of the Chilean revolution at some length; let us now accentuate the following aspects.

When, in August 1977, the Central Committee of the Chilean Communist Party called a Plenary Session to investigate its mistakes and oversights, two main points were singled out. First, the Party had mapped out a sound political strategy covering the entire period up to the partial power takeover and the first phase of people's government. But when it came to seizing full power and advancing to the socialist stage of revolutionary development, its policy planning proved inadequate. Secondly, it had no fixed military strategy. In 1963, it had instituted military training for its members and begun to collect arms to defend the future people's government. But this was not enough, stressed the 1977 Plenary Session; one crucial ingredient was missing: a persistent campaign to recruit the support of the armed forces. A campaign of this order was essential in order to dispel the false, slanderous notions on the working class and the Popular Unity Front circulating among the soldiers, and to bring an undistorted Marxism to their mind. The reactionaries, in contrast, were constantly active among the armed forces.¹

Let us concentrate for the moment on the first aspect outlined above; we shall deal with the second below. The Chilean Communists' list of problems that remained wholly or partially unresolved (for a variety of subjective and objective reasons) obviously coincides with our discussion of how the revolutionary victory was consolidated in other countries. Above, we touched upon such targets as seizing full power and the state apparatus *in toto*, capturing the "command heights" of the economy as the first step towards controlling the entire economic system, involving the working people in managing and reorganising production and drawing up an economic policy calculated to win the "middle strata" over to the side of the revolution. Let us return to the problems Chile faced.

The Chilean revolutionaries took decisive steps towards subverting the domination of monopolies and establishing a strong state sector in the economy. But they did not go

¹ Cf. *El Pleno de agosto de 1977 del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Chile*, Ediciones Colo-Colo, 1978, pp. 27-32, 45.

far enough. What does this mean? Writes José Cademartori, CC member of the Communist Party of Chile and Minister of the Economy in the Allende Government: "The formation of the public sector rid the country, if temporarily, of monopoly tyranny and super-exploitation of the workers, helped to raise industrial production to an unprecedented level, curb inflation in the early period and reduce unemployment. The cooperative system in agriculture proved viable; it began to take root as a progressive form of production management."

However, the public sector *did not become dominant* because some of the major monopolies were left outside it and also because no scientific methods of managing this sector had yet been devised, nor was there adequate experience in carrying on commercial operations. In addition, the bourgeoisie did its utmost to undermine enterprise management."

Indeed, the state sector, for all its significance, failed to integrate the other sectors or ensure their compliance with the Popular Unity programme. All too often the "black market" would jam or disorganise the supply sphere. And until such time as the socialised sector, even if it is backed by a revolutionary power, actually dominates the national economy, no revolution can achieve stability.

The Popular Unity government seriously underestimated the economic strength and influence the financial oligarchy network exerted on the national economy. "The point is that it had set up across the country an intricate system of institutions in the financial field and was developing it in the form of conglomerates involving many types of operations. That is why it was impossible to eliminate the financial oligarchy by separately attacking its parts; it was necessary to see the activity of these economic groups as a single whole. Had the revolutionary power done this, it could have delivered its blows at the chief enemies with greater precision."²

Given the complexities of the modern economy, the problem of the public sector, how it dominates, helps integrate the national economy and restructure the entire system of economic relations, is especially significant to the con-

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3, March 1978, p. 57. (Italics mine.—K. Z.)

² *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 21, No. 5, May 1978, p. 34.

solidation of the newly-established revolutionary power. This is confirmed by what transpired in Chile. Its revolutionary government could not push through enough economic reforms to convince the petty-bourgeois strata that their economic interests were best served by a solid, new democratic power—and this was the key to the absolute anti-restoration guarantee. "It is occasionally said that the middle strata failed to back the Popular Unity government," writes Cademartori, "in spite of the economic benefits they had been granted and that their behaviour was therefore not determined by economic factors but by the fact that their social consciousness had developed under the influence of bourgeois ideology and nothing but pressure from the working class relying on its own strength could have induced them to go along with the revolution.... The middle strata dissociated from the working class on a more and more massive scale under the impact of increasing strategic differences in Popular Unity, growing disorganisation and inflation and incipient anarchy, because their well-being and independence were being threatened. This confirmed that the economic interests of social classes continued to determine their political behaviour."¹

The Chilean Communists attribute their failure to eliminate these and other politically important economic problems to a number of factors, a fundamental cause being the lack of *unified leadership* in the reform campaign. Right in the midst of the revolution, in March 1973, an alarmed Luis Corvalan commented: "Frankly, government policy displays tendencies which cannot be continued. It cannot possibly keep to two or more orientations, two or more lines on such vital issues as, for example, distribution or delineating property spheres.... In concrete terms, we are talking about instituting economic planning to use all available resources and production capacities in the mining and manufacturing industries, to exploit the vast potential of voluntary labour, the innovation movement..., emulation and labour incentives, to take advantage of the close connection which ought to exist between boosting production and labour productivity, raising wage levels and improving working conditions."²

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3, March 1978, p. 56.

² Luis Corvalan, *Chile: 1970-1973*, Sofia-press 1978, pp. 173. 175-76.

Our discussion on Chile thoroughly corroborates the conclusions reached above: the intricate process of economic reconstruction, knocking the economic base out from under the counter-revolution and reorienting economic development to serve the working people demand well-organised supervision. Without it the revolution can neither achieve stability nor advance to socialist construction. This brings us to one extremely important and widely discussed issue.

It is often said that the new, socialist society, based on the direct property and self-government of the working people, will have no need for the state, the "middle-man" between labour and the means of production. Granted, apart from minor inconsistencies in concepts and terminology, this is a valid statement on the ultimate goals of socialism. There is, however, one serious flaw; it disregards the interim period when the state is indispensable—an objectively, not arbitrarily, determined interval. As we all know, it was Marx and Engels who developed the theory of the inevitable withering away of the state. Nonetheless they realised that the state would be needed for a certain time. Arguing against the Proudhon school and similar petty-bourgeois or Utopian socialists, they declared in the "Communist Manifesto": "The proletariat will use its political supremacy . . . to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State."¹

In point of fact, this anarcho-syndicalist aversion to the state is a most infectious disease. From the liberal bourgeoisie it spread to the reformist wing of the working-class movement and thence to broader proletarian circles. At the dawn of socialist construction in Soviet Russia, for example, it spawned the Workers' Opposition right in the ranks of Communists-Leninists. The ensuing debate revolved around one question—what was to constitute the structural base of the socialist economy, the "workers' self-government" or general-state organisation and centralised management? It was a matter of clarifying fundamental principles, for the proponents of "workers' self-government" supported centralised management via the All-Russia Congress of Producers they proposed, while the Leninist majority in the Party advocating state supremacy also stood

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, p. 126.

for democratic production organisation and active, direct working people's participation in management.

How did the Workers' Opposition argue its case? By citing the founders of Marxism, particularly Engels: "Society, which will reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of the state where it will then belong; into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe."¹ In their eyes, it was all very simple; if we are to build a new economy for a new society, they contended, if we support the total emancipation of labour, the free and equal association of producers, if the sole stumbling-block is the state, we must be consistent and take the state out of the economic system.

In reply, Lenin and his followers had to explain self-evident truths: "Engels speaks of a communist society which will have no classes, and will consist only of producers. Do we now have classes? Yes, we do. Do we have a class struggle? Yes, and a most furious one!"² Lenin insisted that "any direct or indirect legalisation of the rights of ownership of the workers of any given factory or any given trade on their particular production, or of their right to weaken or impede the orders of the state authority, is a flagrant distortion of the basic principles of Soviet power and a complete rejection of socialism."³

Nowadays hot-headed leftists and some social-reformists (Bettino Craxi, leader of the Italian Socialists, for one) urge revolutionaries to speed up the destruction of the state. Even right-wing bourgeois politicians have joined the chorus, convinced they have caught the Communists at variance with the founders of Marxism. As we have endeavoured to prove, however, Marxist-Leninist theoretical conclusions and the entire history of revolution from October 1917 to the present, the political and above all the economic prerequisites in razing the old and building a new society, sound a stern warning against such "advice".

¹ Frederick Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 330.

² V. I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 212.

³ Idem, "The Democratic and Socialist Nature of Soviet Power", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 100-01.

The free association of producers, like social self-government, is an immutable communist ideal. But as noted above Marxists-Leninists do not call upon the revolutionary working class to "realise" this "ideal" overnight. It is rather to be attained through implementing the objective laws of social development. According to one such law, the state apparatus must be seized and made the instrument of transition from capitalism to socialism, to communism.

We see, therefore, that while the power problem, the central issue in revolution, is political in content, it can only be resolved through revolutionising the economic sphere. Victory on the economic front is a working-class power's sole absolute guarantee of permanence. By the same token, only a class working people's state can reshape the economic system as required.

**CHAPTER
FOUR
DEMOCRACY**

In the twentieth-century revolutionary process, the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism are indissolubly linked. This, indeed, is its salient feature. In the preceding chapters, we discussed the interconnection between general-democratic and socialist goals, between the class essence and the political forms of the state. It was shown that the majority must see its vital interests tied to socialism as a necessary condition for revolutionary consolidation. In each case, we touched upon the problem of democracy. Since to a large extent the contemporary ideological-political debate centres on this very issue, we shall now focus on those aspects of direct relevance to the economy-politics dialectic in revolution. Our analysis will be based on the following questions: (1) how do changes within capitalist society affect the role and place of democracy in the struggle for socialist transformations and (2) should the working class, as is so often proposed, reconsider this role and readjust its revolutionary strategy to suit?

**Monopolies
and Society**

To begin with, why has the problem of struggle for democracy resurged in bourgeois societies which decades and, in some countries, even centuries ago experienced democratic (or, to be more precise, bourgeois-democratic) revolution? The prime cause, as we see it, lies in the very nature of the capitalist system at its imperialist stage, or state-monopoly capitalism.

"Imperialism is indisputably the 'negation' of *democracy in general*,

of all democracy . . .,"¹ wrote Lenin and today, as never before, these words ring true. The reader will recall that Lenin derived this postulate from his scientific analysis of the essence of imperialism as economically distinct from free-competition capitalism. He proved that "the political superstructure of this new economy, of monopoly capitalism (imperialism is monopoly capitalism) is the change from democracy to political reaction. Democracy corresponds to free competition. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly."²

Contemporary capitalist development features the colossal expansion of monopolies. By choking off all market competition, international corporations narrow the economic base for political competition. They transcend state borders to skirt national control and thus extend an ever more sophisticated political influence to more and more countries. Monopoly associations, wherein of course the strongest rules the roost, exert a direct impact on the policies of parties and governments. These, the signs of our times, corroborate the following axiom: in so far as monopolies oppose economic democracy by crushing competition, once the most important expression of democracy in the commodity production system, they represent the direct antithesis to political democracy as well.

Apologists for big business would have us believe it has reformed its capitalist nature. As large-scale corporations modify their "institutions", it is argued, their economic and political tactics change; "morals and social responsibilities"³ become steadily more important considerations (and the argument is backed by statistics on corporate donations to education, monopolies accepting government commissions, and so on). To which Ben Seligman, prominent American scholar and professor of economics, replies: "The argument that business should be more 'responsible' often evades the central issue in America's major institution—business cannot survive without profit. When 'responsibility' and profit clash, it is profit that invariably

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 43.

² Ibid.

³ Merrymon Maurer, *Great Enterprise: Growth and Behavior of the Big Corporation*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1955, p. 4.

wins out.”¹ Sheer common sense can reach no other verdict on the objectives pursued and role played by monopolies in contemporary society.

For decades, the ideological opponents of socialism and the revolutionary working-class movement have trained their fire on the Leninist precept concerning the interaction between monopolies and democracy. They fabricate diametrically opposed theories to prove the progressive democratisation of capitalist society in the twentieth century. A major, if not pivotal thesis in bourgeois and reformist political philosophy posits democracy as the ground and substance of the contemporary capitalist social system. Bourgeois propaganda defines advanced capitalism as “the free world”, “democracy”, “political pluralism” and the like; these catch phrases, that are passed off as the main features of highly developed capitalism, have had a considerable effect on certain segments of the public. Fascism has been put to rout, colonies and semi-colonies have won national sovereignty, the democratic forces in the capitalist countries have achieved political and economic gains—all this proves, we are told, that monopoly capitalism is moving up the ladder of democracy.

All such ideological constructs are built on a fairly simplistic syllogism: necessity is passed off as virtue. Capitalism is credited with an advance that has nothing to do with its modern nature, an advance made despite, not through capitalism, a victory scored by the revolutionary, democratic, liberation struggle fought in individual countries and on the international scene.

Lenin described imperialism as unmitigated reaction.² Needless to say this is not to be interpreted in the simplistic sense that monopoly rule stamps every aspect of socio-political life with reaction and reaction alone. Like any regular feature of social development, the reactionary trend in imperialism is predominant and insurmountable for as long as the underlying socio-economic conditions exist. Bourgeois democracy is remarkably tenacious. It can even conquer ground from fascism, as recently in Greece or Spain, for example. But as a political system it has lost

¹ Ben B. Seligman, *The Potentates: Business and Businessmen in American History*, The Dial Press, New York, 1971, p. 1.

² Cf. V. I. Lenin, “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, Moscow, 1964, p. 297.

the internal dynamic it had when capitalism developed according to the laws of free competition and the bourgeoisie was still an historically progressive class.

To continue. Imperialism has never dealt an instant, direct or all-extermimating blow to bourgeois democracy. Instead it plunges it into a profound, prolonged and, under the capitalist set-up, interminable crisis. Nowadays, even bourgeois-democratic apologists have sounded the alarm. A veritable tidal wave of journalistic and "scholarly" literature cries out right, left and centre that the representative, Parliamentary, "liberal" capitalist political system is foundering, not flourishing, that capitalism must be saved. This in itself, the sheer volume of doomsday works, is nothing new. But the leitmotif has changed. Whereas bourgeois democracy once had to be defended against assault from the right (the fascist threat) and the left (the revolutionary working class), it must now be protected from its own internal decay.

A most authoritative work on the subject, *The Crisis of Democracy*, was written by a group of authors under the auspices of the Trilateral Commission. Founded in 1973, staffed by leading politicians and ideologists from the USA, Western Europe and Japan and chaired by Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Commission aims to coordinate bourgeois public opinion and policy-making on the "common key problems" of these three centres of contemporary capitalism. Top on the list, significantly, is the problem of political organisation in bourgeois society. No less significant is the "crisis" status it has been assigned. But the cure prescribed is surely the most significant of all.

Having determined that the present political system in the developed capitalist countries reveals an over-widening gap between society's "manageability" and its democratism, that this incompatibility threatens to topple the democratic institutions, the authors recommend ... that democratism be reduced in a number of state-structural and social spheres. This would entail extending more rights to the upper-echelon, especially the executive authorities, and placing certain restrictions on the freedom of the press, reversing the trend towards more accessible higher education, etc.¹ In a word, democracy's salvation lies in its gradual demise!

¹ Cf. Michel J. Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington, Jōji Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy*, New York, 1975.

And these are not idle academic speculations confined to a single book; rather they reflect and generalise actual processes in the political system of contemporary capitalism, processes eroding the foundations of bourgeois democracy. One thing is clear: monopoly-capital ideologists, despite the differing motives, logic and terminology, have come to the same conclusion Lenin reached decades before them—imperialist-stage capitalism “negates” both economic and political democracy. And this holds true even when imperialism seems to act in democracy’s defence. For imperialists are forced to defend bourgeois democracy for a variety of reasons discussed above, as well as the extreme intensity of class contradictions in contemporary bourgeois society and the bourgeoisie’s steadily mounting fears for the future of the capitalist system. All the more alarmed by the crisis phenomena of world capitalism (a permanent feature by the end of the 1970s), those who defend the interests of the monopolies and capitalists have had to revise their position somewhat, shifting the emphasis in their ideological defence of the capitalist system. Generally speaking, they try to play up political issues so as to divert public attention from economic adversities. Bourgeois ideologists, of course, cannot afford to ignore the rising international prestige of socialist democracy either, nor discount its growing appeal. Understandably then, socialist democracy’s achievements have prompted the monopoly propaganda machine to redouble its efforts to discredit the socialist political system and prove some “hopeless parting of the ways” between existing socialism and democracy.

The various arguments now in style among bourgeois economists, sociologists and political scientists follow a standard schema—for all the economic and social difficulties inherent to its economic system (unemployment, inflation, moral degradation and even certain democratic crisis signs), capitalism can still boast of one enduring advantage—representative democracy. To attack capitalism, according to this line of reasoning, is to attack democracy. Confronted with a growing demand for socio-economic transformation, less and less able to deny it, reformists together with representatives of the dominant class insist on barring any social change which threatens the system of established democratic institutions and procedures.

The ideological opponents of communism are all the more anxious to defend bourgeois democracy since the anti-democratic trend aggravates the social contradiction induced by monopoly rule. The latter was defined by Lenin as the "antagonism between imperialism's denial of democracy and the mass striving for democracy."¹ In other words, to this very day imperialism plays a dual role—grave-digger to democracy and, quite unintentionally, generator of the democratic aspirations of the masses. Here we are dealing with the dialectical effect the founders of Marxism discovered long ago in the process of capital concentration and centralisation; while gaining more and more power, capital generates and organises the social force which carries its inevitable destruction. The absolute power of monopoly capital is now escalating the social and political conflict between the upper-crust bourgeoisie and the other classes and social strata, and the latter find common cause in defending democracy against imperialist repression. The autocratic rule of the monopolies both widens the social base of democratic movements and objectively strengthens their political influence.

Parties linked to the international communist movement have scientifically proven that capitalist economic development has substantially changed and continues to change the social structure of the modern exploiter society. We touched upon some of these changes in our foregoing discussion on the class nature of bourgeois rule. They shall now be categorised.

(1) The hired labour force is expanding, both in absolute terms and relative to the total economically active population. For example, the number of wage earners and salaried employees in the private sector rose from 58.3 million in 1964 to 70.6 million in 1970 and 75.6 million in 1973 in the USA² and from 15.6 million in 1968 to 18 million in 1975 in France;³ Italian industrial workers accounted for 50.9 per cent of all hired labour in 1951, 58.9 per cent in 1961 and 61.6 per cent in 1976.⁴

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Reply to P. Kievsky (Y. Pyatakov)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 25.

² *Year Book of Labour Statistics: 1974*, Genova, 1974, p. 276.

³ *Cahiers du communisme*, octobre 1977, p. 16.

⁴ *Rinascita*, 12 gennaio 1979, p. 19.

(2) Large numbers of engineers, technicians, employees and intellectuals have moved significantly closer, in social status, to the working class. Close to two-fifths of hired labour in the USA are office employees whose average income is below that of the skilled labourer. In France between 1954 and 1976 engineering-technical and office personnel climbed from 5.7 to 17.2 per cent of the economically active population, while the wage levels gap between white- and blue-collar workers shrank from 4.2 per cent in 1970 to 3.96 per cent in 1976.¹

(3) In the material production sphere, bankruptcy is pushing more and more petty-bourgeois entrepreneurs into the ranks of the proletariat. Take the USA, for example: between 1948 and 1974, petty- and middle-bourgeois owners of the means of production declined dramatically in relative terms, with an absolute drop from 10.8 to 7.4 million.² French industrial and trade entrepreneurs fell from 1.9 million in 1968 to 1.7 million in 1975.³

(4) Stratification among the bourgeoisie is on the rise; the gap between the monopolistic upper crust and the capitalist class as a whole is widening. By the early 1970s, 200 large monopolies controlled 69 per cent of all sales (turnover) on the capitalist world market.⁴ According to the statistics collected by a subcommittee of the US Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, 122 of the 300,000 corporations registered in the country held two-fifths of the value of all corporate stock.⁵

All these shifts in the socio-economic structure of contemporary capitalism have challenged the social forces fighting for democracy to reconsider their alignments. It is no accident therefore that these problems should invariably be discussed at communist parties' congresses, in communist studies and policy documents.

"Our road to socialism lies in the democratic struggle against the power of big capital," declared the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Denmark.⁶ "We

¹ *L'Expansion*, septembre 1976, p. 92; *Economie et politique*, No. 268, novembre 1976, p. 73.

² *Manpower Report of the President*, 1975, p. 229.

³ *Economie et politique*, No. 6 (279), octobre 1977, p. 8.

⁴ *Multinational Corporations in World Development*, United Nations, New York, 1973, p. 127.

⁵ *Daily World*, 4 March 1975.

⁶ *Land og Folk*, 28. September 1976.

are fighting for an anti-monopoly democracy, one that will pave the way to socialism," say the Austrian Communists.¹ To the Tenth Communist Party of Greece Congress, today's democratic front is the most important pledge of victory.² The programme adopted by the German Communist Party stresses: "No other political force has fought so nobly, so zealously for freedom and democracy as have the Communists."³

Communist parties in Italy, France, Spain, Japan and other developed capitalist countries, like those in the former colonies and semi-colonies, hold democracy to be of paramount importance. Prominent communist activists and scholars elaborate the question in a score of books and pamphlets.⁴

All of which exonerates the revolutionary communist movement of the charge, laid by its opponents, of "contempt" for democracy. For Communists, as we have seen, the problems, role and future of democracy in the struggle for the new, socialist society carry great weight indeed.

From this standpoint, one of these problems, and perhaps the most basic, is the struggle to unite the various

¹ *Der 22. Partestag der K.P.O.* . . . , p. 41.

² Cf. *Kommunistiki Epitheorisi*, No. 6/7, 1978, p. 30 (in Greek).

³ "Programm der Deutschen Kommunistischen Partei", *Unsere Zeit*, 25. Oktober 1978. Dokumentation, p. 17.

⁴ Alvaro Cunhal, Secretary-General of the Portuguese Communist Party, discusses the defence and expansion of democracy at length in his major work *A Revolução Portuguesa. O Passado e o Futuro*, Edições Avante!, Lisbon, 1976. Among the many studies on democracy and the class struggle we recommend: Herbert Mies, Chairman of the German Communist Party, and Hermann Gautier, Vice-Chairman, *Wir Kommunisten und das Grundgesetz*, Frankfurt am Main, 1977; Georges Marchais, Secretary-General of the French Communist Party, *Le défi démocratique*, Bernard Grasset, Paris, 1973; Henry Winston, National Chairman of the Communist Party of the United States, *Class, Race and Black Liberation*, International Publishers, New York, 1977; J. A. Alvares, Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Argentina, *Ahora avanzar hacia una amplia coincidencia democrática*, Buenos Aires, 1976; Gilberto Vieira, Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Colombia Central Committee, *Las libertades y la Unidad Popular*, Ed. Suramerica, Bogotá, 1977, and *Política y revolución en Colombia*, Bogotá, 1977; Ernst Wimmer, member of the Central Committee Politbureau of the Communist Party of Austria, *Demokratie, Klassenkampf*, Wien, 1977; and Villy Fuglsang, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Denmark, *Kommunisterne og det Danske Samfund*, Forlaget Tiden, Copenhagen, 1977.

social groups and strata fighting the all-powerful monopolies.

Of course, each national anti-monopoly alliance has its own unique socio-political composition, organisation and concrete action plan. Nonetheless, as noted at the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, each and every one dreams "of limiting the role played by the monopolies in the economies of the countries concerned, of putting an end to the power of big capital and of bringing about such radical political and economic changes as would ensure the most favourable conditions for continuing the struggle for socialism".¹

Alliances, Interests and Goals

The problems faced in forming broad-scale anti-monopoly alliances are so complex as to merit our call for a detailed analysis. One such issue concerns the stability of the socio-economic base for political coalitions representing diverse classes, social strata and population groups. It is not enough to state that this base expands, in absolute and relative terms, to incorporate social groups of varying but largely coincident interests. The precise degree of coincidence must be calculated.

Let us compare two diametrically opposed viewpoints on this question. The first holds the degree of coincidence to be very high, and the second considers it insignificant. What does each of these arguments imply?

The first assumes the basic, overriding contradiction besetting modern capitalism to be that between monopoly capital and the rest of society. All democratic forces, the overwhelming social majority, follow economic interests opposing those of the monopolies. Since the working class dominates this front, all the other classes are attracted to its social status. For this reason, supposedly, the proletariat and other social groups, its allies in the anti-monopolistic majority, come to have essentially the same interests.

In this light, it is argued, democracy is seen to play a leading role in society. On the one hand, it promotes "majority rule" in decision-making, which suits the anti-mo-

¹ *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow. 1969, Prague, 1969, p. 27.*

monopoly forces, the majority. On the other, it reinforces the majority itself, since any residual divergence of interest within its ranks can be settled through "pluralistic" democracy.

According to the opposite school of thought, contemporary capitalism reduces the contradiction between the monopolies and the majority to a superficial, if not totally inconsequential, conflict. The basic class antagonism is still that between labour and capital. Moreover, society's major fault-line does not separate the monopolist upper crust from the rest of the population, rather it cuts off the foot of the social pyramid—the groups most vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation, the "marginal strata" (to use the fashionable sociological term). This viewpoint, and its usual corollary that the working class has "lost" its revolutionary potential to "integrate" further and further into the bourgeois system, has spawned many an ultra-left creed.

The second argument, then, finds the anti-monopolistic segment of society to have non-coincident interests. What is more, in accentuating the divergence of interests between the "integrated" and the "marginal" groups of the working people, it questions whether or not the democratic struggle has a sufficiently broad social base and, more importantly, strips democracy of all meaning. The only way to overthrow the power of capital, it turns out, is through the violent uprising of the most deprived minority.

Note that both schemas select but a few socio-economic structural features of present-day capitalism as their basic premises. In contrast, Marxism-Leninism takes the sum total into account and hence avoids the one-sidedness of the above conclusions.

Thus, while recognising that the anti-monopoly social forces are united by significantly common interests, scientific communism does not conclude that the conflict between labour and capital is no longer the principal contradiction in modern capitalism. This antagonism is rooted in the capitalist formation itself, in the capitalist mode of production. The contradiction between the monopolies and the rest of society is in all cases of secondary importance. Which is not to say that it may be dismissed altogether. On the contrary, in scope and intensity, it affects every sphere of society with equal force.

Communists, therefore, focus on the "coexistence", the overlapping of two antagonisms, each defining its own hierarchy of social interests.

A most instructive comment on this issue is offered by Friedl Fürnberg, a prominent Austrian Communist: "At the same time, a distinction should be made, in our view, between the fundamental contradiction of the social system and the main political contradiction of a given development stage. It is important to bear this distinction in mind although, in principle, every political antagonism is ultimately rooted in socio-economic contradiction.

"Consequently, while attaching due importance to the political contradiction that arises in contemporary capitalist society between monopoly and the majority of the people, and keeping it in mind in working out our strategic line, we must also bear in mind its distinction from the fundamental contradiction of capitalism—that between labour and capital—which ultimately determines the essence of all key issues of the class struggle."¹

A sober appraisal of economic realities produces sound politics. Strategy, the Marxists-Leninists insist, must be oriented on political alliances with parties which speak, politically and ideologically, for the non-proletarian, petty-bourgeois and "intermediate" strata of the population. In the 1970s, communist parties in the capitalist countries concentrated on working out viable cooperation arrangements with various working-people organisations and left-wing, democratic parties. The Communists' stance on relations with allied parties was discussed above, in the section on proletarian hegemony. Here we are concerned with yet another aspect: Marxists-Leninists do their utmost to discourage short-lived coalitions slapped together for election campaigns or a single political target. For Communists, common front politics is not a tactical manoeuvre, but a long-term strategy aimed at coordinating all left-wing forces fighting against capital to democratise and eventually socialise society. It is the Communists, therefore, the true champions of the working people, who seek alliances with parties on the left. Unfortunately, their advances are all too often turned down. We need only quote statements made by Willy Brandt, Bruno Kreisky, Olof Palme and other

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 19, No. 10, October 1976, p. 24.

social-democrat leaders. In an interview printed in *Der Spiegel* after a meeting of West European socialists and social-democrats, Brandt categorically refused to cooperate with the Communists.¹ In all his publications and speeches, Kreisky points to insurmountable contradictions precluding joint communist-socialist action.²

Many a socialist leader in South-West Europe is tilting to the right. The Italian Communists, in the theses drawn up for their Fifteenth Congress (March-April 1979) expressed concern over the latest Italian Socialist Party line; the entire left wing, to say nothing of Italy's chances for political change, stands to suffer from such tactics.³ As this book is written, the Portuguese Communists' persistent efforts towards alliance with the Socialist Party have yet to come to fruition. The Portuguese Socialists are unwilling to go beyond joint action on scattered issues to cement a solid political counter-weight to reaction. The right wing in the Spanish Socialist-Labour Party is equally opposed to a united left front, especially to collaboration with the Communists.

Whenever the Socialists side with the Communists, ulterior motives are involved. Take the French Socialist Party. In 1972, pressed by the people's movement to sign the Joint Programme, its leaders set their sights on boosting their own party at the expense of the Communists; when the time was ripe, they planned to resume the right-wing social-democratic tradition. To this end, as the French Communist Party noted at its Twenty-Third Congress, they exploited the Joint Programme, fostering, despite all Communists' efforts to expose them, an elaborate myth on their party evolution and goals. As well, they relied on the practice of postponing all decision-making until after the elections. "The right wing," note the French Communists, "has always preferred this game of killing two birds with one stone: protecting their own power on the one hand and on the other trying to degrade the Communist Party in the eyes of the left so as to destroy the alliance and promote their own social-democratic line."⁴

¹ Cf. *Der Spiegel*, No. 5, 26. Januar 1976, pp. 24-25.

² Bruno Kreisky, *Aspekte des demokratischen Sozialismus*, p. 102.

³ "Progetto di tesi per il XV Congresso nazionale del PCI", *L'Unità*, 10 dicembre 1978, Documenti.

⁴ *L'Humanité*, 15 mai 1979, supplément.

These examples, drawn from real life and not some pre-determined schema, illustrate democracy's potential for rallying the majority of the people to fight against the monopolies and for socialism. Indeed, nothing cements a broad people's alliance so well as democratic aspirations. Cultivating a democratic spirit is crucial to any coalition; without it the participants cannot determine which interests unite and which divide them. For certain internal contradictions, reflecting the deep-rooted antagonisms of the bourgeois socio-economic structure, inevitably persist within any broad-based democratic front.

This the Communists understand full well. The French Communists, for example, in the above-quoted resolution adopted at the Twenty-Third Congress, observe: "In 1972, after ten years of struggle, we signed a Joint Programme with the Socialist Party. We realised this agreement could not solve and would even increase the problems involved in the fight for democratisation. We know that the Socialist Party was not like our own, that its strategy was not like our own."¹

Contemporary events have shown this position to be entirely appropriate for other communist parties as well. Democratic left-wing coalitions emerge and act amidst the mounting contradictions of bourgeois society, confronted by a steadily intensifying class struggle. Naturally, each member party reacts in its own way to each new socio-political problem. At the same time, communist common front strategy calls for joint action against a common enemy, the monopolies, for greater unity within the ranks, for collective effort towards collectively set objectives. Diversity of opinion cannot run counter to solidarity; for the united democratic movement, the primary ideological target must be the monopoly capitalists and their apologists. And here the Communists set the example, resolutely exposing the monopolies' exploitation network and political oppression.

Faced with so formidable a foe as monopoly capital, the allied parties must mobilise their every available resource (this includes ideology). The front must work out a consistent line of attack. Accordingly, Communists refuse to countenance ideological neutrality among its vacillating reformist allies. They regard the doctrine of "universal tole-

¹ Ibid.

rance", indifference to departures from the common programme (where such programmes exist), as tantamount to abandoning party independence, to reducing the working-class party's goals to reformist slogans.

The 1976 European Communist and Workers' Party Conference held in Berlin outlined this position in no uncertain terms: "The participants in the Conference welcome the successes achieved in a number of countries and at international levels in developing cooperation between communist and socialist or social-democratic parties. They consider that the basic interests of the working class and of all working people require the overcoming of the obstacles which stand in the way of cooperation and which complicate the struggle of the mass of working people against monopoly capital and against the reactionary and conservative forces.

"The communist and workers' parties participating in the Conference reaffirm their rejection of any policy or ideology which in essence means the subjection of the working class to the system of capitalism. They underline their determination to work consistently for the strengthening of their Parties and for the extension of their ties with the working class and all working people. At the same time, they stress once again their readiness to contribute towards cooperation, on the basis of equality, with all democratic forces and in particular with the socialist and social-democratic parties in the struggle for peace, democracy and progress for society."¹

In rallying left and democratic parties and organisations, therefore, unity and struggle are complementary, not mutually exclusive, factors.

How did Lenin and the Bolsheviks approach this issue? This is not an academic question. With bourgeois and reformist "advisers" urging revolutionaries not to consult the textbook of history or, at least, to revise the strategy used in past revolutions, it is of immense historical and immediate strategical significance.

Lenin was challenged on the viability of Communists' participation in the democratic movement. He proved that given the broad, country-wide scope of the democratic

¹ *For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe. Berlin, 29-30 June 1976, Moscow, 1976, p. 42.*

movement, should the Party refuse to join political coalitions, should it attempt to conduct a single-handed struggle restricted to the proletariat's class demands, it would in effect refuse to take part in the revolution, adopt a tailist stance, and forfeit all chance of political success. He condemned the Mensheviks, Trotskyites and other Russian and international opportunists who maintained that the proletarian party need not be particularly active in the general-democratic struggle, since the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois movements could see it through on their own. These self-proclaimed defenders of the independent working-class party were, in fact, as Lenin showed, trying to turn the conscious, militant vanguard of the proletariat into a parochial organisation devoid of all political meaning.

"In the interests of the revolution," he wrote, "our ideal should by no means be that all parties, all trends and shades of opinion fuse in a revolutionary chaos."¹ In other words, the working-class party seeks not some abstract coalition but a common front dedicated to specific political goals, resolved to direct the revolution away from "chaos". This, then, is Lenin's viewpoint on proletarian party independence vis-à-vis political alliances. The revolutionary party of the working class asserts its independence not by standing aloof from the revolutionary, democratic movements sponsored by other parties, but by making its influence felt, by stamping a "proletarian imprint" to the general struggle. Categorical rejection of any and all revolutionary-democratic coalitions or sacrificing revolutionary integrity to unity within the front, adhering to the demands convenient to all participants, including the most inconsistent—both these extremes make party independence an empty phrase.

Thus, Lenin did not take a mechanical "either-or" approach to the contradiction between coalitionary unity and party independence. He saw it in a dialectical light, as a dynamic combination and interaction. In terms of the class and political content, Lenin's solution meets both general-democratic and purely proletarian objectives.

One often comes across statements to the effect that the Bolshevik's theoretical orientation on class alliances did not stop them from being "incorrigible sectarians" in political

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Militant Agreement for the Uprising", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 165.

practice. History demonstrates quite the opposite in the Bolshevik attitude to coordinating all revolutionary political forces, forming blocs and signing accords. When his party had just launched its campaign to spread Marxism in Russia and merge scientific socialism with the working-class movement, for example, Lenin was willing to make compromises with the bourgeois "legal Marxists"¹. During the revolution of 1905-1907, the Bolsheviks made several joint-action proposals to the Menshevik wing of the social-democrats; working agreements were concluded in a number of Soviets, as well as in the strike movement. Moreover, in the interests of a consolidated, nation-wide revolutionary movement, they were prepared to cooperate with the democratic bourgeoisie in a broad people's political coalition. As Lenin wrote at the time, a working-class party "which operates in a bourgeois society cannot take part in politics without marching ... *side by side* with bourgeois democracy ... with the revolutionary and republican bourgeoisie".²

Proof of the Bolshevik pursuit of working-class political parties' solidarity lies in the Fourth (Unity) RSDLP Congress (1906). They were the active organisers and participants in this Unity Congress, while the Mensheviks turned the fruits of their labours to naught, an agreement on paper only, calculated to undermine the Bolshevik Party.³

Even before the revolutionary 1917, as the critical period approached, the Lenin's Party staunchly rejected any rapprochement whatsoever with the reformist political trends in the working-class movement. "As hitherto, ~~we~~ consider

¹ Legal Marxism: an ideological-political trend supported by certain progressive Russian bourgeois circles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Scattered Marxist economic tenets were used to rationalise Russian capitalist development. The movement rejected revolution and proletarian socialism, but was only too happy to quote Marx's arguments on capitalism's progressive nature as compared with feudalism and the natural evolution from the feudal to the capitalist socio-economic formation.

² V. I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 46.

³ F. Dan, a Menshevik leader, betrays these ulterior motives in his comment on the Congress: "It's all over for the Bolsheviks now; they'll flounder about for a few months more and then dissolve altogether into the party." (Quoted from A. V. Lunacharsky, *Vospominaniya i vpechatleniya* [Memories and Impressions], Moscow, 1968, p. 40.)

it admissible for Social-Democrats to join a provisional revolutionary government together with the democratic petty-bourgeoisie, but *not* with the revolutionary chauvinists."¹ "No rapprochement with other parties,"² he telegraphed the Bolsheviks leaving for Petrograd from Switzerland in March 1917. "... We must go to the elections without blocs, upon a straight issue of principles announced in the programme of the proletarian party,"³ he declared in the Bolsheviks' April 1917 resolution on the Petrograd election campaign. And these ~~are~~ but a few examples of his firm position.

But surely these statements prove the Bolsheviks to be sectarians?—cry the critics of communism. Not a whit, we reply. For on the same Petrograd elections, Lenin wrote: "I am decidedly in favour of placing on our tickets the names of the Menshevik candidates who are breaking with chauvinism."⁴ This alone should convince even the layman that the Bolsheviks refused to align themselves with the "moderate socialists" simply and solely because of the latter's chauvinistic stance on the war question. At that point, the revolution itself hinged on this very issue, for each day the war dragged on, the people paid in lives and livelihood, and the bourgeoisie reaped the returns in counter-revolutionary strength.

The power question also split the Bolsheviks from the SR-Menshevik bloc. And there could be no compromise here so long as the conciliators, whose majority in the Soviets had made them the virtual ruling party in Russia, stubbornly insisted on leaving power in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Twice between February and October 1917, the Bolsheviks campaigned for "peaceful revolutionary advance", offering the "moderate socialists" the chance, failing close alignment, to improve inter-party relations through mutually profitable joint action in the all-powerful Soviets. The conciliators turned both opportunities down, thereby cutting off all hope of compromise.

A close look at revolutionary history, therefore, reveals

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Several Theses", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Moscow, 1964, p. 403.

² Idem, "Telegram to the Bolsheviks Leaving for Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 292.

³ Idem, "The Petrograd City Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 158.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

no evidence of a "sectarian" bent among the Bolsheviks; what we find instead is that the correct policy balance between unity and party independence precludes the end-in-itself approach to alliances with the democratic left.

The above analysis refutes yet another widespread misconception—that the working class has but recently discovered the revolutionary strategy of social alliances and political blocs, that its "fundamentally new" politics have progressed to democracy, beyond the "non-democratic, elite-sectarian tenets" of Leninism. It is even maintained that successful communist parties have abandoned the trail blazed by the October Revolution to forge a completely different route, the popular front policy. But this "parting of the ways" theory is totally unfounded for, as we have just seen, Leninist revolutionary strategy has always incorporated cooperation with progressive, democratic forces, with other left-wing parties. Furthermore, since the broad democratic front strategy originated with Lenin, today's communist parties are not groping about unconsciously for some chance new route; rather they are consciously adapting a well-charted course, each to its own specific national context.

The working-class-peasant alliance is a cornerstone of Leninist theory and practice. All too often, however, this revolutionary fraternity is dismissed as a "Russian-only" phenomenon, theoretically and practically meaningless for the industrialised capitalist countries, with their negligible peasant minorities. As a host of Soviet scholars has dealt conclusively with these misconstructions, we need not dwell on them here. Suffice it to note that the Russian peasant's revolutionary role is, on the general theoretical level, synonymous to that played today by the petty bourgeoisie, the "intermediate", "middle" strata, a factor of enormous significance to modern communist party strategists working on broad anti-monopoly coalitions.

This is a most complex issue. It is not enough to say that the social status gap between the "intermediate strata" and the proletariat is, according to many parameters, narrowing, that given the democratic rein of his own free will, the petty bourgeois will certainly join the worker on the road to socialism. For in fact, their economic interests, like those of the pre-revolutionary Russian peasants, are highly contradictory, a tangle of pro- and anti-socialist sentiments.

Moreover, and this must not be overlooked, social forces inevitably regroup as the democratic phase of the revolutionary struggle comes to a close and direct socialist transition approaches. The democratic movement and the socialist movement have different social bases—nothing can change this cold hard fact.

This is not to say that economic and social shifts in the capitalist structure have no impact on democracy's potential in the socialist struggle. On the contrary, a broader democratic front, which is what monopoly economic tyranny leads to, can tip the balance towards socialist reconstruction. A democratic struggle involving a wide cross-section of society is an excellent and much-needed political training ground for the masses; here they become conscious of their true class interests and find their proper bearings in the fundamental conflict between labour and capital.

On the other hand—and this is especially significant—the rising proportion of workers in the economically active population, the proletariat's key role in social production, its concentration in the leading branches of the economy, improved organisation and greater influence, advance the democratic movement all the closer to the struggle for socialism. Marxist-Leninist parties now include these new avenues to socialism in their anti-monopoly strategy.

Experience has also shown that each democratic, social or political victory in the battle with reaction helps revolutionaries reach a more profound, scientific understanding of the correlated democratic and class goals sought by the working-class struggle. Yet each achievement also contributes to the myth that capitalist democracy, limitless in potential, is the one and only way to establish the working-class state and push through socialist economic reforms.

As the reader is no doubt aware, this is the traditional social-reformist standpoint. But its recent penetration into political circles close to the revolutionary working-class movement lends it a new significance in the world ideological struggle. More importantly, the bourgeoisie, prompted by its class instinct, has given these views full-scale publicity, encouraging their proponents to subordinate the socialist ideals of the working class to socially abstract, general-democratic values. In this light, the debate on democracy, particularly as related to socialism and the socialist struggle, takes on new, more urgent, dimensions.

Bourgeois ideologists claim that socialist reconstruction is nothing more than the antithesis to democracy. By fair means and foul, they belittle and even discount the role played by the revolutionary forces of the working class, the Communists' fight to assert and extend the people's democratic rights and freedoms. With their reformist colleagues, they chant variations on one and the same theme: revolutionary Communists believe society is transformed through armed force alone, ergo communist parties can have no vested interest in consistently defending democracy and its institutions. No sooner does the revolutionary vanguard of the working people come to power, concludes the chorus, than democracy is doomed. By way of proof, they twist the policies pursued by the victorious socialist revolutions into "anti-democratic repressive" measures.

What is more, politicians linked to the revolutionary working-class movement are sometimes heard to say that socialist revolutions of the past were, for a variety of historical reasons, "not democratic enough". Hence, they infer, modern-day strategy on the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist order must be fundamentally revised.

If we substitute factual analysis for the arbitrary interpretation of history, it becomes obvious that the past socialist revolutions, preceded and primed by the democratic struggle, hastened democracy's progress by giving it a new, socialist basis. Anti-communist ideologists spread the opinion that October 1917 cut short the democratic development launched in Russia by the February Revolution. "The liberal democratic interlude in Russian history ran from February to October 1917,"¹ writes the British bourgeois historian John Dunn. According to the authors of the six-volume *The Soviet System and the Democratic Society: A Comparative Encyclopaedia*, bourgeois historians from the USA and Western Europe, the October Revolution brought "the collapse of revolutionary democracy"². They see the

¹ John Dunn, *Modern Revolutions: An Introduction to the Analysis of a Political Phenomenon*, Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 34.

² *Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft: Eine vergleichende Enzyklopädie*, Bd. 4, Herder, Freiburg, Basel, Wien, 1971, p. 924.

Provisional Government as a veritable model of democracy, with the October Revolution as its direct antithesis. But what actually happened?

It is true that the bourgeois-democratic revolution gave the people political freedoms hitherto unknown to Russia. In February 1917, Lenin remarked, "the Russian revolution . . . toppled the autocracy" and gave "the Russian people unprecedented freedom . . . unmatched among any people of the world."¹ During the first few months after the February Revolution, parties of all political creeds campaigned freely in Russia. The old tsarist prisons released political prisoners; political emigrants poured back into the country. Censorship was lifted on all newspapers (excluding the banned monarchist newspapers). The people took control of public buildings. Freedom of speech, association and demonstration was guaranteed. The trade union movement, almost non-existent prior to the revolution, burgeoned.

The unique state-administration political system produced by the February Revolution exhibited an unusually high degree of democratism for a bourgeois republic: the "dual power" granted the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies the right to supervise the bourgeois Provisional Government.

Such were the broad outlines of Russian democracy after February 1917.

Nonetheless, Lenin saw the democratic rights won in the February Revolution as "the relative and partial freedom".² And he had every reason to do so, for the democratic regime established by the bourgeois revolution was still a bourgeois democracy—bourgeois in content, bourgeois in form, bourgeois to the very core.

In what was by currently prevailing standards the world's most democratic country, the people's most urgent democratic demands had been ignored. Nothing was done to stop the war, when the overwhelming majority of society and, needless to say, the working people, cried out for peace. Nothing was done on the agrarian problem; the peasantry.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Report on the Results of the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B) at a Meeting of the Petrograd Organisation, May 8 (21), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, Moscow, 1969, p. 432.

² Idem, "Draft Theses, March 4 (17), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 290.

by far the largest population group, oppressed by need and total dependence on the landowners, actually lacked elementary democratic rights. The Provisional Government stonewalled on the reforms most essential to the industrial proletariat, blocking for example the introduction of the eight-hour work day. The right of peoples to national self-determination was not even recognised on paper; any expression of non-Russian national interests was prohibited and punishable by law. Eventually, even Alexander Kerensky was forced to admit: "We were marking time everywhere, in the army, on the agrarian question, on the question of war and peace. You could say that the whole country was marking time, chained to the Cadet stump."¹

Even by such purely political parameters of democracy as freedom of speech, the press, association and demonstration, the Provisional Government (all four Cabinets) was nowhere near so democratic as its admirers contend. Reprisals against the workers' democratic activities of April 1917 smacked of the pogrom; many a peaceful demonstration was banned; the Bolshevik leaders were arrested after the events of July, the entire Party persecuted continually from February to October 1917, their newspaper offices raided—none of this quite fits the tale of infinite "liberalism and democracy" trumped up by bourgeois and reformist pseudo-experts on the history of 1917.

As the structure of and relations among the upper houses of government shifted, the erosion of political democracy became all the more apparent.

The July crisis signalled the end of the "dual power". The SR and Menshevik leaders capitulated to the Cadet ultimatum, voiced by Milyukov: "The Soviets must bow out of the political arena."² The ensuing new government was not accountable to democratic bodies. Executive power, now exempt from the Soviets' control, quickly degenerated into a rubber stamp for various conservative, authoritarian politicians. Take the Kornilov-Kerensky "teamwork" on the counter-revolutionary plot, or their subsequent rivalry, the clash of two would-be dictators, with Kerensky playing the young Bonaparte, his sights set on a "Directoire" and himself as First Consul.

¹ A. Kerensky, *Izdaleka* (From Afar), p. 235.

² *Rech* (Speech), 23 July 1917.

Neither Kerensky nor Kornilov were able to carry all their dictatorial plans to fruition. But the reactionaries succeeded in "legalising" blatant anti-democratism by relieving the government of all responsibility to any representative institution whatsoever. Democracy was buried with all due parliamentary-democratic pomp. A hand-picked All-Russia Democratic Conference was called to form the Provisional Soviet of the Republic (the "Pre-Parliament"). There followed unending political debate, ballot after ballot, protests and chaotic committee recruitment; resolutions already adopted were suddenly revised or totally garbled in application.

This make-believe parliamentarianism masked the truncation, the "fleecing" of democracy; more importantly, it sanctioned the forces rallying to wipe out the last vestiges of political freedom and the people's democratic gains. Whereas in April 1917 the upper-crust bourgeois politicians had plotted their military dictatorship behind closed doors, whereas in August Kornilov had dared not publicise his real intentions, by October Minister Verkhovensky was openly demanding that the "Pre-Parliament" endorse the armed "suppression... of the internal popular unrest".¹ In October as well, the Second Moscow Congress of bourgeois "public figures" called just as stridently for military dictatorship.

This then was the true state of political democracy in Russia on the eve of the October Revolution. The reactionaries had already done everything in their power to set democracy on the road to destruction, using the odious military-police tactics to which the bourgeoisie invariably resorts whenever its class rule is threatened. The Great October Socialist Revolution in fact restored genuine democracy.

In the first place, it foiled the Provisional Government's plans to minimise political freedoms in Russia. It nipped the emerging military dictatorship in the bud.

Secondly, the working-class power it established promptly executed the democratic transformations the country had expected of the Provisional Government, only to see its hopes dashed by constant power shifts in the administra-

¹ Cf. P. N. Milyukov, *Istoria vtoroi russkoi revolyutsii* (A History of the Second Russian Revolution), Vol. 1, Issue 3, p. 136.

tion, the constant changeovers of bourgeois and conciliatory parties.

On the first day of its existence, the Soviet State issued the Decree on Peace. This was a decisive first step towards meeting the democratic demand crucial not only to the peoples of Russia, but to all the other nations embroiled in the imperialist war. The socialist revolution swept away the medieval hangovers blocking Russia's social and political progress—the landed estate system, national oppression, ecclesiastical privileges, discrimination against women and the wretched plight of the working man. October 1917 cured all these long-festered sores, bringing democratic renewal to Russian society. As Lenin said, "we solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing, as 'by-product' of our main and genuinely *proletarian-revolutionary*, socialist activities".¹

Finally, the radical reshaping of socio-economic relations begun by the October Revolution provided a material base for consummating the working people's democratic rights proclaimed by law. Furthermore, it instituted social freedoms unknown to capitalism, including, first and foremost, the freedom from man's exploitation by man. Thus, the October Revolution did more than assert genuine political democracy; it led the world in democratising the very foundation of society, its system of socio-economic relations.

Democraticism, imbued with the distinctive flavour of national uniqueness, was a hallmark of the Great October and all the socialist revolutions to follow. In Central and South-East Europe the socialist revolutions crushed fascist reaction on both the military and the political fronts and ushered in the triumph of democracy. In Asia, as the direct outcome of the victorious national liberation struggle, they established the first principle of democracy—the right of peoples to national sovereignty. Cuba's socialist victory resulted from the people's struggle against the imperialist-dominated police dictatorship.

The democratic route to socialism is often contrasted, by its advocates, to the socialist revolutions of the past. What do they mean? If it is a matter of qualitatively altering the actual process of society's transformation, then they can only intend to replace the socialist goals of the struggle

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 54.

with limited socio-political democratic objectives. In other words, they refuse to go beyond the limits set by bourgeois democracy, the bourgeois order. If, in turn, this is taken to indicate that the substantial socio-economic structural changes now observed in many capitalist countries, together with massive realignments among the national and international class forces, offer revolutionaries unprecedented scope for working through established democratic institutions, then we must certainly concur. Communists spoke of these new revolutionary channels over 20 years ago. The Declaration of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries (signed by all delegates to the International Meeting of 1957) noted a variety of routes to socialism bypassing civil war; Communists should fight for a solid majority in Parliament with a view to turning it from a tool serving the class interests of the bourgeoisie into a weapon for the working people.¹ This, we repeat, was announced over 20 years ago. Subsequently, the communist and workers' parties refined and adapted this policy to the dictates of circumstance, aware that the complexities of modern economy and politics do not fit any preconceived "model" whatsoever. (For that matter, the very term "modelling" is scarcely applicable to the transition from capitalism to socialism. Governed by objective laws, this transition demands a well-weighted revolutionary strategy. At times, however, it takes such complex, exceptional and unpredictable turns as to defy all preconceived models, even those constructed on the basis of the most sophisticated computer technology. The Marxist-Leninist term "the strategy of the revolutionary struggle" is therefore preferable, in that it takes in objective laws and current factors, and includes flexible adjustment to unforeseen circumstance.) "Each Party," to quote the Main Document issued by the 1969 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, "guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism and in keeping with concrete national conditions, fully independently elaborates its own policy, determines the directions, forms and methods of struggle, and, depending on the circumstances, chooses the peaceful or non-peaceful way of transition to socialism".²

¹ *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, Moscow, 1963, p. 19.

² *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties*, Moscow, 1969, Prague, 1969, p. 37.

At this point, the reader may ask: where do we take issue with the proponents of some "special" democratic route to socialism? On the use of parliamentary means? No. On the inadmissibility of civil war? No again. We object to the tendency to put absolute value into the form (this applies especially to parliamentary democracy), to make it, that is, an end-in-itself, eclipsing the main issue, the essence of the transformation sought. We disagree with those who declare that peaceful revolutionary development is not merely the most desirable, but the *only* democratic, the *only* acceptable, route to socialism. We dispute the all but total identification of democratism in revolution with legality, the notion that a nation can achieve revolutionary progress within the bourgeois legal set-up, at both the democratic and the socialist stages. Let us take a closer look at some of these issues.

The word *democracy*, as we all know, in its original and most exact sense, means nothing less than "the power of the people". Yet it also has a secondary meaning, indicating an entire complex of political institutions and procedures, the organisational and administrative norms of a given society. In so far as all these democratic institutions and procedures are supported by force of law, democracy in this secondary sense rests on the principle of legality and, in the capitalist society, on bourgeois legality. The layman often sees democracy ■ power of the people and democracy as legality as synonyms. Bourgeois ideologists deliberately play up the confusion; social-reformists exploit it in one way or another. In point of fact, however, these two concepts are not identical and in certain cases they are even mutually exclusive. To our way of thinking, any discussion on the peaceful route to socialist revolution must centre on the correlation between democracy as power of the people and democracy as legality (i.e., bourgeois-democratic legality).

We have already shown that when the revolutionary working class assumes state leadership, it establishes the real power of the people. By the same token, the revolution can permanently consolidate its first political victory if and only if the majority of the population throws its conscious support behind the new regime. In this respect ■ well, therefore, the newly-founded state-political organisation of society is, in essence, the genuine power of the people. Now,

the victorious socialist revolutions in Russia in October 1917 and in several other countries certainly did not observe the strict norms of bourgeois-democratic legality; quite the contrary, in violating and transcending these standards, they signalled the birth of a new, socialist legality.

Does the old legality conflict with the new when the socialist revolution takes the peaceful route? The question demands a second look at the revolutionary process, particularly the rise and fall of the Chilean revolution. Indeed, Chile drew the attention of the whole world to the problems encountered on the peaceful, legalistic road to socialism and, like every present-day analyst, we too must consider its implications for the future of socialist revolution.

The Popular Unity Government used the bourgeois-democratic legal apparatus to win power (or, as the Chilean Communists put it in their documents, partial power). The Chilean revolutionaries were fully aware that for large segments of the population, and particularly the politically unstable vacillating "intermediate" strata, this strategy legitimised the new government. To the extent that bourgeois-democratic legality pinned the reactionaries (for a while at least) to the letter of the law, it served the cause of revolution. This in turn enabled the Popular Unity Movement, which enjoyed the power advantage, to carry out a number of major socio-economic reforms, as well as foil the political coups mounted by local and foreign counter-revolutionaries in October 1970, March 1971, October 1972 and June 1973.

Still, this selfsame democratic legality gave the Popular Unity's opponents ample scope to regroup and manoeuvre. Sheltered by the letter of the law, the imperialists and the local reactionaries attacked the revolutionary government on all fronts—the economic, political, ideological and military. They used the mass media to spread all kinds of rumours. A telephone and letter campaign, calculated to spark panic buying, warned the public of imminent shortages and price hikes, creating artificial queues. Shop-owners hoarded basic commodities and consumer goods. Fighting for the "man in the street", the reactionaries organised the ill-famed "pot and pan marches" and similar demonstrations. They even stooped to terrorism in their effort to alarm the public. Between June 1972 and February 1973, 105 as-

sassination attempts were recorded, and 17 Popular Unity activists were slain.¹

Even then it was obvious that a conciliatory attitude to the counter-revolutionaries and applying classless concepts of freedom and democracy to their machinations was a dangerous standpoint indeed. On 29 August 1972, in an open letter addressed to President Allende, Luis Corvalán outlined the Communists' position as follows: "Recognising the rights of the opposition should not prompt us to condone every conceivable excess and crime. Certain representatives of the opposition think they can run roughshod over the law. There are opposition newspapers and radio stations which have made lies, insults, slander, fictitious and alarmist reports their daily fare Our first obligation to the people and the country is to put a straitjacket on those who would plunge Chile into a blood-bath. If we are to support and guarantee freedom and democracy, it is our responsibility to bring the full force of the law down on all who resort to crime with the intent to overthrow the government and establish a fascist dictatorship."²

In the final analysis, the Chilean bourgeoisie, the reactionary military clique and their imperialist patrons scarcely considered themselves bound to match the revolutionary government's strict adherence to the law. Obviously, then, to insist on a pedantically narrow interpretation of the legal forms of the struggle, to restrict the revolutionary struggle to the electoral mechanism and institutions of bourgeois democracy, is to endanger the revolutionary movement. While Communists-Leninists advocate the use of democratic channels, they constantly remind the people that, should the situation deteriorate, they must be prepared to rebuff the counter-revolution.

As the Chilean Revolution demonstrates, under the mounting tension of the class struggle, bourgeois legality serves both the revolution and reaction. "During the revolution in Chile," comments Volodia Teitelboim, member of the CPC Political Commission, "the forms of the struggle became almost as important as the goal; it was as if form had been raised to the category of *essence* . . .—and this was certainly a mistake."³ Teitelboim continues: "The people have no

¹ *Los 1000 días de revolución...*, p. 127.

² *El Siglo*, 31 de agosto de 1972.

³ *Los 1000 días de revolución...*, p. 42.

reason to feel bound hand and foot, like Gulliver, to legality; the law must be seen as a useful tool for defending the just cause of the people and not, by any means, as a trap or shackle."¹ And the Chilean Communists conclude, in total conformity with the classic tenets of Marxism-Leninism: "*Democracy must serve the people, rather than give free rein to the counter-revolution.*"²

We must bear in mind that the Chilean Revolution did not reach the socialist phase, when the clash between bourgeois legality and revolutionary goals is even more pronounced. To be sure, both the labour vs. capital and the monopoly vs. anti-monopoly conflicts have introduced a certain compromise element into contemporary bourgeois jurisprudence. Yet by no means is this compromise equal to both sides. For the capitalist system is geared first and foremost towards the smooth functioning of capital, sheltering the economically dominant class, protecting their privileges and interests. Though it may vary widely from country to country, its basic design is universal—to perpetuate the society it serves. Like a railway track, it has a single, fixed direction and goal—capitalism. Or, to expand the metaphor, however powerful the engine pulling society ahead, the "track" can never lead to socialism.

On the other hand, the democratic struggle can attempt to change the law, to tear up the old "track" and lay down a new. There are many obstacles, as today's communist and workers' parties point out: the people cannot express their free will under the present electoral system, the law guards the privileges of the parties in power, etc. Such is the case, for example, in France with its *majorité* electoral system, and in Spain where, as noted in the Communist Party's pre-election bulletin, "the oligarchy and the local authorities use the discriminatory electoral procedure as their basic tool. This is precisely the intent behind the Decree-Law adopted in early 1977."³ Accordingly, Communists fight for legislative reform.

Now, campaigning to "re-lay the track" of bourgeois jurisprudence is a far cry from advocating anarchy and law-

¹ Ibid., p. 44.

² Ibid., pp. 121, 165-66.

³ Programa electoral del Partido Comunista de España. Aprobado por el Comité Central del PCE, en su reunión de los días 11 y 14 de enero de 1979, Madrid, 1979, p. 17.

lessness. The law must be democratised, not abolished; it must be made to serve the working masses, not capital. But since capitalist legal institutions safeguard the capitalist form of ownership, socialists, as mentioned above, cannot count on big capital to relinquish its stronghold without a fight. Rather they must apply revolutionary force to establish a *new legality* working for the people, working that is for genuine democracy.

It is common knowledge that to right-wing bourgeois and ultra-left ideologists the Chilean experience negates the very concept of the peaceful road of revolution. The Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* spoke loud and clear for the right wing when, after a steady barrage against the Popular Unity Movement throughout the entire 1000 days of its administration, it hailed the revolution's downfall: "What happened here in Chile is of importance to the whole world, for we have succeeded in turning back the tide of Marxist revolution, a process which, as a rule, is irreversible. Communism has fallen to defeat . . . it was routed on its second strategy line, the legal route, aborted on 11 September in Chile."¹ To illustrate the leftist standpoint, we may quote from a study sponsored by the Latin American Institute at the University of Glasgow; defining the Popular Unity policies as "reformist", the authors contend: "The tragic history of Chile is . . . a reflection of the fact that reformists never make revolutions."² Chile, they infer, should be a "warning" to communist political strategists who would opt for the peaceful revolutionary struggle and fight for victory without resorting to arms.

But did Chile really explode the theory of peaceful revolution? He who replies in the affirmative should, for consistency's sake, maintain that the concept was discredited long ago, in July 1917 say, when the Bolshevik Party was forced to abandon peaceful means for insurrectionist tactics in the struggle to transfer power to the Soviets. Yet on no account did this revolutionary tactical manoeuvre condemn the *principle* of peace in revolution. On the contrary, two months later it was revived, albeit for a very short time. Then again, by September 1917, Russia had exhausted all

¹ Quoted from *Los 1000 días de revolución* . . . , p. 8.

² Ian Roxborough, Philip O'Brien, Jackie Roddick, *Chile: The State and Revolution*, Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., New York, 1977, p. 283.

peaceful channels—does this invalidate the principle once and for all? No. Subsequent revolutions, in Hungary in 1919, in Central and South-East Europe after World War Two, demonstrate its potential in establishing the class rule of the working class and the working people given the proper power balance between workers and exploiters. In this light, the Chilean experience must be seen as the latest link in the unbroken chain of world revolutionary history.

For this reason, Marxist-Leninist students of the Chilean defeat do not in the least infer that the militant working class should reject bourgeois-democratic legality out of hand. Quite the reverse, they must defend democracy to their utmost once, infused with a new social content, it has drawn the fire of the reactionaries. In late 1978—early 1979 Portugal, for example, entered the stage of socio-political development at which the bourgeoisie resorts to flagrant constitutional violations to protect its economic interests, attacking the legal code established by the revolution. In response, the Portuguese Communists put top priority on “respect for the Constitution and democratic legal institutions”, emphasising that “the primary obligation falls on the supreme bodies of power, especially the government”.¹

Communists-Leninists are even more careful to avoid ascribing Chile's undoing to the lack of democratic traditions, solidly entrenched legality and the like. It is absurd to contend that “Latin American” democracy, with its shallower roots as compared to the “European” brand, misfired in Chile. Chile stood head and shoulders above its Latin American neighbours in bourgeois-democratic development. Her rich and time-honoured democratic traditions included a principle of immense significance to the present discussion—the decades-old ban on the army's interference in politics.

For Marxists-Leninists the most important lesson to be learned from the Chilean events is that neither road to revolution—through force of arms or peaceful means—should be raised to an absolute value. Imposing rigid dogmatic restrictions on revolution, tying it down to established democratic norms and traditions, keeping it at all costs within

¹ “O PCP e a defesa da democracia face aos planos da reacção”, *Avante!*, 18 de janeiro de 1979, *Separata*, p. vii.

the "sacrosanct" framework of legality, inevitably leads to forfeiting the ground won by and through this selfsame bourgeois legality.

Communist Party documents record these conclusions. The British Party Programme, for instance, comments that should a left-wing workers' government come to power and launch the all-round democratisation of society with a view to socialist transformation, "the ruling class will fight against this process by every possible means".¹ An attempted reactionary coup de force is "neither inevitable nor impossible".² In which event, the left-wing workers' government must be prepared to take the most decisive counter-measures.³ The Communist Party of Austria hopes to bypass civil war on its way to socialism. "At the same time we realise that the bourgeoisie will not voluntarily renounce its class domination. Whether or not we succeed in preventing the enemies of socialism from unleashing civil war will depend on how the class front develops in Austria and the world at large."⁴ According to the Danish Communists' Programme, when the victory of anti-monopoly democracy opens up the direct route to socialism, "it is to be expected that the reactionaries, with all the requisite means at their disposal, should try to turn back the tide. They will attack the newly-won rights of the working people. They will mount propaganda campaigns against anti-monopoly undertakings. To achieve their goals they will even stoop to conspiracy. Active democracy will have to repel such attacks."⁵

"Communists do not advocate force for force's sake,"⁶ declares the Communist Party of Columbia. "Given the specific conditions of the struggle in our country, the bloody traditions set by the oligarchy, the latter's reliance on the

¹ *The British Road to Socialism*, Farleigh Press, London, 1978, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³ *Cf. Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴ "Der 22. Parteitag der K.P.Ö.", pp. 342-43.

⁵ XXXV *syezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Danii. Kopenhagen, 23-26 sentyabrya 1976 goda* (The Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Denmark: Copenhagen, 23-26 September 1976), p. 141.

⁶ *Por la Unidad Popular para el Futuro de Colombia. Documentos del 12 Congreso del Partido Comunista de Colombia*, Editorial Colombia Nueva, Bogota, 1976, p. 119.

politics of repression, its unceasing attempts to delude the people, the Communist Party, without rejecting a single form of mass struggle, considers armed struggle indispensable to our revolutionary process." ¹

From the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, therefore, bourgeois-democratic norms and traditions are not so stable as to ensure peaceful socialist development, let alone the radical reconstruction of society. It is rather mass mobilisation in the struggle against monopolies and reaction which best promotes, if not guarantees, society's progress. When threatened from the right or by the leftist elements, Communists defend the prevailing democratic and legal institutions in the name of the people and the socialist society of the future. Nonetheless, a system rooted in and subservient to the bourgeoisie will never win their total approval.

It is the end-goal which shapes Communists' strategy, particularly where democracy is concerned. "With Democracy to Socialism!" proclaimed the huge banner hung at the Eighth Portuguese Communist Party Congress and on this entirely fitting note we end this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE:

INTER- NATIONALISM

We may approach the economy-politics interaction in revolution from two angles: that of world revolutionary development, present and future, and that of the various revolutionary forces' struggles in a single country, and their new opportunities. In so doing we are following traditional Marxist-Leninist methodology on the one hand and on the other tackling the many and much-confused problems posed by contemporary developments.

Today's world is often rightly said to have "shrunk"; in this "small world" every sphere of human activity is locked into a network of interdependencies more extensive, more "internationalised" than ever before. Which means that every capitalist country, every national arena for the revolutionary struggle that is, has been absorbed into an unprecedented system of regional and global economic, political and military connections.

Understandably, the "smaller" the world, the more important the international factors affecting the prospects of revolution. What concrete forms does this syndrome take? How does it influence the revolutionary movement in a single country? Which of its forces must we neutralise; on which may we rely?

In the "Communist Manifesto", Marx and Engels demonstrated that capital is an international, cosmopolitan force and as such destroys national boundaries to create a single world market. "In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency," they wrote, "we have intercourse in

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every direction, universal interdependence of nations."¹ Today, almost one and a half century later, no one can dispute this scientifically precise definition of a general development trend in the system of capitalist economic relations. Lenin's theory of imperialism disclosed its specific fundamental manifestations under monopoly capital rule. He proved that imperialism's intrinsic drive to redraw the world economic and political map had substantially changed the capitalist "internationalisation" process.

The modern non-socialist camp corroborates Lenin's analysis; to this very day, the content, thrust and channels of imperialist expansion form the sum and substance of capitalist internationalisation. Its concrete expression however has significantly altered, as has the correlation of the various elements entailed.

Internationalisation in the present-day world capitalist economy proceeds on many fronts. Among them—the emergence of major regional complexes such as the European Economic Community, the burgeoning of multinational corporations and the formation of ever closer bi- and multi-lateral international economic ties. In this way, the entire capitalist world is merging into a single economic system.

International monopolies, with their rapid accumulation of finance and production resources, have played a vital role in this process. The pace of resource concentration ensnaring dozens of countries has climbed dramatically since World War II. Their direct investment rate rises two or three times faster than that in most capitalist states; the total production volume at the foreign enterprises controlled by today's top one hundred industrial monopolies is estimated at 500,000 million dollars, a figure well above the gross export values recorded for the entire capitalist bloc. International monopolies can on short notice mobilise 250,000 to 300,000 million dollars worth of floating assets or twice the currency reserves held by the capitalist world. "Bourgeois economists expected that in 1985, 300 major monopoly groups will account for roughly three-quarters of the capitalist world's industrial production, while the num-

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, p. 112.

ber of decision-making centres will be even smaller."¹

The modern face of imperialism is the domination, by international monopolies, of the world capitalist economy. Its basic features include production monopolisation, economic partitioning of the world by capitalist associations and the export of capital. Though Lenin's description of these traits pertains to a comparatively early phase of imperialist formation, its essential outlines are valid to this day. Of particular significance is his conclusion that monopolies are transnational corporations in name only, their actual internationalism being limited to their sphere of operations while their controlling capital, save for rare and ultimately unimportant exceptions, is uni-national and more often than not uni-national American. In this light, their appreciable role in internationalising and integrating the world capitalist economy is matched by the world capitalist economy's growing domination of the main centres of imperialism.

Imperialism, as we all know, strives for colonial monopoly, for the direct political conquest of foreign lands and peoples. Today, however, colonial regimes are well nigh extinct. That the peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean have won national political sovereignty represents a major shift in contemporary world development. Moreover, imperialism has been forced to abandon its erstwhile tactics; it can no longer use economic domination as a mere stepping stone to unembellished political enslavement.

By no means does this imply that imperialism has forsworn its characteristic drive to suppress national independence. Monopoly capital has simply changed the way it internationalises its domination and exploitation system. The emphasis has been shifted from outright political subjugation to economic means of control and influence. With respect to former colonies and semicolonies, imperialist expansion is now widely defined as "neocolonialism". "Faced with such a crisis and with growing successes of the anti-imperialist forces, imperialist strategists are working out new neocolonialist tactics adapted to the realities of the present situation. Particular concentration is directed

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 21, No. 9, September 1978, p. 67.

towards the economic sphere where imperialism still holds strong positions and the newly-independent countries are most vulnerable. A system of measures has been worked out to promote the development of 'dependent' capitalism in the newly-free countries through a greater, more intensive, involvement of these nations in the international capitalist division of labour."¹

Lenin resolutely opposed those who portrayed imperialism as a political phenomenon (the politics "preferred" by financial capital, to quote Kautsky) as opposed to a specific phase in capitalist economic development. Time and again he stressed that imperialism was first and foremost an economic phenomenon, rooted in the rise and rule of the monopolies.² While the political aspects of imperialism are not to be discounted, they must take second place to its economic essence. This, the only correct Marxist-Leninist approach, is shown to have particular scientific validity today. Whereas politics must move with the times, concede to the revolutionary, liberation forces, soft-pedal its methods and seek greater flexibility, the economy, its integration processes, its growing host of international corporations, its neocolonialism, is more than ever the unmistakable prime mover in international imperialist expansion.

This is not to say that *politics* is an insignificant sphere in which state-monopoly capitalism develops, and invents more and more international weapons to defend their interests and consolidate their rule. During the last quarter century they have drawn over countries in North and South America, Western Europe, the Near and Middle East, South-East Asia, Australia and New Zealand into a network of political blocs. Four of these—NATO, CENTO, SEATO and the Anzus Pact—are *military* as well as political alliances, while the OAS is a purely political organisation. As an outstanding example of international imperialist union, NATO is the political counterpart to the EEC. Many are those who claim NATO is a non-aggressive alliance. Even politicians close to the working-class movement tend to ignore the differences between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty. But in 1950

¹ "Political Resolution Adopted by the XI Congress of the Communist Party of India. Bhatinda, March 31-April 17, 1978", *New Age*, 23 April 1978, Supplement, p. 6.

² Cf. V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 285-98.

doing they turn a blind eye to the economically-determined expansionist policies pursued by any imperialist bloc. Does the much-touted NATO "umbrella" "shelter" the European peoples from the fabricated Eastern menace? No, it "shelters" imperialist expansion. The facts speak for themselves: "Since World War II," notes the magazine *New Times*, "NATO countries have perpetrated over 100 aggressive acts."¹ In addition to multilateral blocs, the imperialists have worked hard to establish a bilateral military-political system. These treaties have made a good many developing countries even more dependent on the leading capitalist powers, chiefly the USA.

State-monopoly capital, the bourgeoisie and its class champions, have considerably boosted their international political clout by forging *multi-party alliances* embracing ultra-right elements, social-democrats and every doctrine in between. According to the French Communist newspaper *L'Humanité*, West European fascists reap the profits of a scandalous "common market" which "though little advertised is all too real".² In 1976 European Christian Democrats merged into the European People's Party (EPP) and the European Liberal Federation was established. The year 1978 saw the formation of the European Democratic Union (EDU), representing for the most part the conservatives of Western Europe. "Tories of Europe, as it were, unite!"³ quipped *The Economist*, a British bourgeois mouthpiece, hailing the birth of this "conservative International". On the Socialist International front, social-democratic parties have stepped up their efforts toward international cooperation and ideological-propaganda coordination. Asia, Africa and Latin America are now the prime targets in the Socialist International's campaign for world-wide influence. Since World War II prominent social-democrats have been flocking to Africa, pushing the Socialist International representation from nil in 1950 to two full-fledged parties in 1978. Their success in Latin America and Asia is even more impressive: between 1952 and 1978, Latin American social-democratic parties grew from two to seven and their Asian counterparts from three to seven. In a word, bourgeois and

¹ *New Times*, No. 14, April 1979, p. 25.

² *L'Humanité*, 23 janvier 1975.

³ *The Economist*, 29 April 1978, p. 64.

reformist political internationalisation is today both an extensive and an intensive process.

Internationalisation forges a chain of international connections to shackle revolutionaries and freedom fighters in individual nations. The most graphic, up-to-date example is, of course the Chilean Revolution.

The imperialists' initial response to the Popular Unity electoral victory is documented in an infamous CIA secret memorandum: "On the threat to US interests we conclude: (1) the USA has no vital national interests in Chile, but the economic losses entailed could be tangible; (2) the world military balance would not be substantially changed by an Allende administration; (3) an Allende victory, however, could incur considerable political and psychological losses; (a) the political stability of the hemisphere would be threatened by an Allende government, the challenge it would represent to the OAS, and the reaction of other countries, (b) an Allende victory would mean a certain psychological setback for the United States and a definite psychological victory for Marxist ideology."¹ Such was the American imperialists' in-depth forecast on the Chilean revolution, its impact on world development and the tactical strength of international monopoly capital. How they acted upon it is common knowledge.

Marxist-Leninist parties are fully aware of what enormous responsibility they bear in leading the revolutionary movement. They must (1) take a sound reading on the power balance affecting the revolution-charged class struggle; (2) understand that any purposeful action towards overthrowing the power of capital requires courage in the face of possible defeat; and (3) weigh the predictable international consequences, particularly the likelihood of armed imperialist intervention.

Clearly, the high degree of internationalisation in modern society is always a crucial consideration. We have demonstrated its importance in the economy. Similarly, the armed conflict provoked by imperialist intervention in a single revolutionary country can be exported or "internationalised", escalated to include the modern weapons of

¹ Quoted from the Spanish translation as given in "Informe de la Comisión Church", *Boletín Informativo*, No. 85, Comité Chileno de Solidaridad, febrero-marzo de 1976, cited in *Los 1000 días de revolución*, pp. 140, 149.

mass destruction. Revolutionaries, therefore, cannot belittle this dangerous probability. For such is the cruel reality of our times; it cannot be ingored, nor should its impact on the future of the revolutionary struggle be underestimated.

The many and diverse viewpoints on internationalisation expounded by bourgeois and reformist ideologists invariably harp on the same theme: twentieth-century international interdependencies objectively "prohibit" revolution. In each case, the theorist has "absolutised" one or another aspect of what is in fact an indivisible and highly complex internationalised body of phenomena and processes. For example, from the observation that a nation's economy is locked into the world capitalist system, he might conclude that any reform to its social base spells total ruination. Or in a similar vein, he might twist the wholly logical hypothesis that a revolutionary outburst in one country inevitably provokes a world-wide political reaction to contend that revolution inevitably leads to international upheaval and even thermonuclear war.

In these extremist views the bourgeoisie's class fear of revolution is thinly disguised. Even the milder bourgeois chauvinists beat the same drum, arguing that the ever-tightening web of international interdependencies narrows the scope for revolution. And some activists in the workers' movement, not to be outdone, tend to exaggerate the might of these shackles of internationalisation.

But is internationalisation really such a one-sided affair? Have contemporary international ties in fact choked off the revolutionary struggle once and for all?

Consider, for example, the imperialist alliances of SEATO and SENTO. Designed to avert anti-imperialist reforms in the Middle East and South-East Asia, they used to function most effectively. Nevertheless, despite the best laid plans of their founders and leaders, they also had a reverse political effect on the six original Asian member states; their anti-nationalist orientation stirred patriotism among the masses and lent fresh vigour to the liberation movement. In the long run both imperialist semi-colonial blocs were able to forestall neither major changes in their respective spheres of influence (in Iraq in 1958, in Iran twenty years later) nor their own inglorious demise.

NATO has received essentially the same response from the broad public in Western Europe. Protests and demon-

strations against the dangers posed by the political and especially the military functions of the North Atlantic Pact, against its restrictions on national sovereignty, have stimulated the West European democratic movement. Eventually, the bourgeois elite was forced to bow to public pressure as France and later Greece withdrew from NATO's military organisation.

Internationalisation is particularly relevant not so much to the initial period of the mounting revolutionary movement as to the immediate post-revolutionary period, when the class nature of power has considerably or even radically changed. At this point, the victories won during the democratic and socialist stages of the revolution must be consolidated despite the cumbersome economic and political chains of world capitalism. This very issue can shed light on the causes of the Chilean defeat.

As stressed above in the section on the consolidation of revolutionary victory, the vast majority of the population must see its fundamental economic interests tied to the new working-people power; this we defined as crucial to securing revolutionary gains. With regard to Chile we quoted the Chilean Communists to note that the Popular Unity Government failed to carry through the economic measures necessary to recruit all the working and petty-bourgeois masses to its side. It lacked a viable economic policy programme and mechanism for counteracting the imperialists' "destabilisation" schemes, a weakness the counter-revolution was quick to exploit.

Though the national economy inevitably suffers when its external ties are severed and its imperialist enemies turn to sabotage, this is no grounds for rejecting revolution or limiting its goals. Rather it demands a comprehensive economic programme for the "second day", a contingency plan to cover foreign economic affairs.

Here too the economic ties and interdependencies of world capitalism are not to be seen as a counter-revolutionary factor alone. In breaking off contact with or imposing an international blockade against a revolutionary state, the bourgeoisie cuts off its nose to spite its face. In the long run, disrupting international commercial and production ties harms international capital. World history has shown that economic blockades may be effective as relatively short-term counter-revolutionary measures, but make

poor long-range strategy. It will be recalled that imperialism hoped to smother the fledgeling Soviet State through international isolation, only to renounce this policy by the early 1920s. Lenin remarked at the time: "As for the blockade, experience has shown that it is an open question as to who suffers from it the most, the blockaded or the blockaders."¹

In a word, the newly-established revolutionary power faces no absolute danger in economic isolation. Objectively, its "affiliation" to the international capitalist economic system affords limited scope for counter-revolutionary sabotage, which is in any case easily offset by a well-planned economic policy to win majority support.

How does revolutionary consolidation relate to foreign affairs? Clearly, the revolutionary state has one overriding concern in this area—the threat of a punitive military expedition mounted by imperialism. As noted above there is nothing to guarantee that international reaction will refrain from armed intervention, nor is the revolution's victory over foreign invaders to be taken for granted. But there is no call for going to the opposite extreme and assuming that imperialism will automatically resort to open armed aggression.

The history of world revolution shows that the imperialists have often dared not attempt outright external repression. True, fourteen powers invaded the newly-established Land of the Soviets, in 1919 the imperialists brutally quashed the Soviet Republic in Hungary, the USA attacked socialist Vietnam and Cuba has withstood a number of well-organised, foreign-backed armed invasions. But on the whole, socialist revolutions' triumphs far outnumber imperialist reprisals, to say nothing of vanquished revolutions. Counter-revolutions have always been waged chiefly by the local bourgeoisie and reactionaries with, of course, the sympathy and support of international imperialism. Such was the case in Chile, where the fascist *putsch*, while inspired and led by the United States, was carried out by Chilean military conspirators. Obviously, therefore, the military-political threat faced by victorious revolutions must be expected primarily from internal, rather than international, sources. In other words, the imperialists are more

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Moscow, 1966, p. 152.

likely to work through the local reactionaries than undertake foreign intervention.

Hence, many communist and workers' parties conclude, the danger of armed imperialist intervention, the "export" of the counter-revolution, should not be exaggerated, nor taken as cause for disbanding the revolutionary forces. On the contrary, maximum mobilisation is called for, the overwhelming majority of the population must be recruited to knock the socio-political ground out from under the local reactionaries and the external enemy, should he choose to interfere.

National revolutionary forces can, therefore, limit the economic and political impact of external reaction. When estimating the probability of armed invasion, however, the correlation of national and international factors affecting revolution must be weighed against the global situation as a whole, not just the dependencies of world capitalism. And this is imperative because armed intervention is military conflict and in today's "small world" any regional confrontation can spill over into world war. As discussed above, anti-revolutionary ideologists belabour this very point to couple revolution with the risk of thermonuclear catastrophe.

Needless to say, no national boundary can fence revolution off from today's topmost international issue—the problem of war and peace. Nor is this problem isolated from peace-time relations. It is closely linked to the internationalisation of these relations, with the entire world split into two, mutually hostile, social systems. Thus, the global problem of war and peace hinges on the relations between the states in opposing social systems and their changing power balance.

Can revolution in a capitalist country lead to world war? We believe the danger to be minimal. To be sure, Marxists-Leninists have always outruled contempt for the international environment in revolution. It is sheer folly, they insist, to forget that the aggressive imperialists are simply waiting for a convenient excuse to unleash war; far better to see no such excuse comes their way. Yet while imperialism is quite prepared to intervene and crush revolution through force of arms, it balks at broad-scale international conflict—a difference the Communists fully appreciate.

Wars, it need hardly be said, are fought on *causes*, not *excuses*. No serious historian would maintain that had it not been for the Sarajevo assassination of the Austrian Archduke, World War I could have been avoided. It would be even more absurd to hunt for some specific incident as the direct cause of World War II. The aggressor will always find some excuse. Any policy built exclusively on "seeing no excuse comes his way" is futile as, for instance, the ill-fated Munich Agreement of 1938¹ demonstrates. And revolutionaries must reject a policy which, in essence, means retreat, capitulation to the aggressor. This is of particular relevance to the chauvinistic, pro-imperialist line adopted by the present leaders of China.

In contrast to *excuses*, *causes* reveal both the real origin of and real deterrent to war. This is the Marxist-Leninist approach to the international war threat vis-à-vis the revolutionary onslaught on property, power and the privileges of capital; it concentrates on assessing the overall system of relations on the international scene and the world class forces' power balance.

The general historical trend over the past six odd decades has been to shift this balance in favour of socialism. Hence, present-day international relations are centred on and shaped by the struggle between two opposing social systems and, in turn, exert a qualitatively new influence on the various national revolutionary movements.

This new pro-socialist world power balance has thwarted imperialism's aggressive designs for World War III. For imperialism itself has not changed; it has escalated rather than cut back on its economic and political militarisation. It has amassed an unparalleled material, military and technical arsenal to fuel its age-old expansionist drive. Nevertheless, confronted by so powerful an international rival as the socialist community, by mounting pressure from the working-class, democratic and liberation movements in the capitalist camp, it is no longer so free to manoeuvre.

¹ The Munich Agreement: a treaty on the partitioning of Czechoslovakia signed in Munich, 29 September 1938, by Great Britain, France, Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. A hallmark in the Anglo-French policy of "appeasing" Germany at the expense of Central and South-East Europe, an attempt to deflect the fascist drive away from their own countries towards the East, towards the Soviet

One crucial aspect has moved into the forefront of the twentieth-century dialectics of war and peace: while imperialism's social and material base is expanding, its class antithesis in the world community has forged a mighty counter-weight to militarism with the strength to defend and even impose peace. This has created the objective prerequisites for restructuring the entire system of international relations on the principle of peaceful coexistence, for turning from the cold war to détente.

Marxists-Leninists regard the new world power balance and the trend towards normalised international relations as favourable to the revolutionary movement. Communist party documents from many capitalist countries emphasise this very point.

"The changing international power balance," reads the resolution adopted at the Twenty-Third French Communist Party Congress, "the progress of détente and peaceful co-existence are crucial to France's democratic road to socialism."¹ The Danish Communists' Programme observes that "the new situation opens up new avenues for the transition from capitalism to socialism in both the developed capitalist countries and the newly-formed states struggling to overcome their backwardness by embarking upon the non-capitalist route".² "In today's conditions," declares the Communist Party of Turkey Programme adopted at the 1977 Konia Confederation, "profound changes in favour of peace, democracy and socialism are taking place in the balance of world forces.... This development is restraining the extreme reactionary forces and strengthening the people's struggles for nation independence, democracy and social liberation."³ Jesus Fária, Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Venezuela, writes: "The turn towards détente helped to make possible the enormous successes recently achieved in liberating formerly dependent peoples and their acquisition of political and, in some cases, economic independence."⁴

Union, it sanctioned Hitler's blatant military and political repression of Czechoslovakia.

¹ *L'Humanité*, 15 mai 1979, Supplément.

² XXV sjezd Kommunistického partii Danii. Kopenhagen, 23-26 sentyabrya 1976 g. (Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Denmark; Copenhagen, 23-26 September 1976), p. 80.

³ *Communist Party of Turkey: Programme 1978*, p. 93.

⁴ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 21, No. 4, April 1978, p. 4.

Consequently, while every capitalist society is locked into the world system, international ties do not constrict the revolutionary movement. Quite the opposite, it draws new strength and vigour from many important aspects of social internationalisation, particularly the rising might of socialism in today's world. To deny this, to insist that deep-rooted international interdependencies merely impede the struggle for socialism, is to overestimate the relatively insignificant international factors actually working against the revolutionary movement.

There is, however, one more aspect to be considered. In recognising the substantial impact of positive international factors are we implying that they, and not the national democratic class struggles, ~~are~~ now the principal motive force in revolution? In a broader sense, which factors should determine the strategy in the struggle against the capitalist economic system?

The Law of non-Uniformity

The literature issued by international Marxist-Leninist conferences and by communist and workers' parties in the capitalist countries testifies to the Communists' realistic understanding of contemporary economic and political processes. Communists realise that individual countries are objectively bound to seek stronger, more diverse political and cultural ties. But, they assert, this should not encroach upon national sovereignty and should favour society's progress from capitalism to socialism. With big capital's controlling the internationalisation of social affairs, each national communist party works out its own international strategy to counteract imperialism's efforts to take advantage of integration processes. Each organises its country's mass struggle around concrete demands.

The German Communist Party, for example, offers an in-depth analysis of the international associations founded and run by the bourgeoisie. "It is in the national interests of the Bundesrepublik," states their Party Programme, "to break our one-sided bonds with US imperialism and organisations in the imperialist bloc. The GCP is against sacrificing our sovereign rights to NATO and the EEC. It stands for complete national independence.... The GCP

recommends the working class join the West European democratic forces to safeguard their national sovereignty. It fights against NATO's arms-race policy, against the erosion of democratic rights, against increased exploitation in the EEC. It recommends the trade unions, communist and workers' parties, and social-democrats, and all progressive forces band together against multinational concerns, against a monopoly-dominated West Europe."¹

It is important to note the diversity of European communist parties' stances on the European Economic Community, an international organisation formed by the bourgeoisie in nine West European countries, now steadily shifting from economic to political goals.

Communist parties from the West European states long and deeply committed to the Common Market (France, for example) struggle for a more democratic EEC of a less isolationist and pro-monopolistic orientation, with greater respect for national sovereignty. Georges Marchais outlines the French Communist Party position as follows: "We could not concede the capitalists from our neighbouring countries the right—disguised by the 'Supranational Europe' slogan—to prevent our people from building the political and social system of their choice.... A Europe dominated by big capital will never be anything but an appendage to the Atlantic bloc. Since reactionary politicians serve the finance magnates, they can no more oppose the penetration of American capital and American-dominated multinational corporations than denounce their class solidarity with the leader of world imperialism. The only independent Europe is the democratic Europe of the working people."² The Twenty-Third FCP Congress reaffirmed Marchais' stance. "It is in the interests of the French people to oppose our country's submersion into... Europe," reads the Congress resolution, to oppose "extending rights to the future European Assembly and any form of supranationality".³

Communist parties from the newer EEC member states advocate withdrawal on the grounds that their national economies and living standards have suffered from affilia-

¹ "Programm der Deutschen Kommunistischen Partei" *Unsere Zeit*, 25. Oktober 1978, Dokumentation, p. 18.

² Georges Marchais, *Le défi démocratique*, p. 236.

³ *L'Humanité*, 15 mai 1979, Supplément.

tion to the Common Market. For instance, the Political Resolution drawn up at the Sixteenth Irish Communist Party Congress (March 1975) notes that "far from resulting in the promised extra jobs and better living standards, [Ireland's joining the EEC] has caused a tremendous increase in unemployment, driven thousands of small farmers off the land, contributed to steep increases in prices and extended the presence and activities of the multinational corporations in Ireland". The Congress demanded "the ending of membership in the Common Market".¹

According to the Danish Communists' Programme, "Denmark *must withdraw* both from military block such as NATO and isolated economic communities such as the EEC and the Economic Agency".² Write the British Communists: "Withdrawal from the Common Market and an end to its economic and political restrictions would enable Britain to determine its economic strategy and develop its trade on a world scale."³

Finally, Communists from most non-EEC West European states adamantly oppose any attempt to draw their economies into the Common Market monopoly sphere of influence. Addressing the Eighth Portuguese Communist Party Congress, Alvaro Cunhal stressed that "a truly *national* policy is needed to cope with national problems, a policy based on the *interests of the Portuguese people* rather than *pressure, threats, blackmail or interference from the foreign imperialists and the European social-democrats*. Portugal's entry into the 'Common Market' will not bring her independence, it will subjugate her."⁴

The Tenth Congress of the Communist Party of Greece issued a detailed warning against the Common Market: "Upon joining the European Economic Community of monopolies, Greece will find itself trapped in a much more complex, much more restrictive, system of dependencies—military, political and otherwise. The EEC will control our international economic ties. Major economic, social and po-

¹ *Ireland in Crisis: The Communist Answer*, pp. 3-4.

² XXV съезд Коммунистической партии Дании. Копенгаген, 23-26 сентября 1976 г. (Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Danish Communist Party: Copenhagen, 23-26, September 1976), p. 137.

³ *The British Road to Socialism*, p. 39.

⁴ VIII Congresso do PCP. 11 a 14 novembro 1976, p. 34. (Italics mine.—K. Z.)

litical issues will be decided outside Greece, to a much greater extent than today.

"It is, of course, patently absurd to claim that joining the Common Market will reduce Greek dependence on the USA. While the two imperialist centres are engaged in the fierce competition observed both here in Greece and abroad, they also coordinate their operations. Moreover, the Greeks clearly see that the EEC forms the economic basis of an American-dominated NATO.

"Exploiting its strength in the EEC, US capital will continue to meddle in the Greek economy.... The working people of Greece are not interested in the 'ethnic origin' of dependence; they are resolved to do away with imperialist dependence *in toto*."¹

It is only natural that the various revolutionary working-class movements should take an uncompromising stand on protecting the economic and political sovereignty of their countries against the monopoly bourgeoisie's integration group. The Communist parties, however, must consider the realities of the integration process in Western Europe; they must face an established and expanding EEC mechanism of international economic and political ties. They confront a special challenge in determining the proper national to international ratio in the struggle against a bourgeoisie refortified by its integration association. They must dedicate themselves to turning the "Europe of monopolies" into the "Europe of the working people". No one disputes the goal; the point is, how is it to be achieved?

Some think the key to success lies in a stronger Communists' voice in the political institutions of the EEC, particularly the "European Parliament". This, it is believed, will democratise "little Europe" to make it the catalyst for radical socialist transformations within the member states. Such is the basic hypothesis behind the argument that the revolutionary movement can adapt the bourgeoisie's integration organisations to its own ends and forge from them an international weapon for the working class.

Communist parties outside Western Europe are also concerned with the problematics of the anti-bourgeois integration struggle.

¹ *Komunistiki Epiteorisi*, No. 6-7 (1978), pp. 27-28.

Marxists-Leninists have the theoretical and practical grounding needed to work out a viable position on international associations, and more importantly, to judge the above-described arguments for their reform from within and potential for revolutionary transformation. They can look back to the early 1910s, when the European democrats raised a similar debate with their campaign for a republican United States of Europe (the USE). For a short time, the Russian Bolsheviks backed the concept, in view of its broad-based appeal for the progressive, anti-war, anti-imperialist public. In the CC RSDLP Manifesto, "The War and Russian Social-Democracy", written in the autumn of 1914, Lenin declared the USE to be the "immediate political slogan of Europe's Social-Democrats".¹ But the Bolsheviks, he insisted, had to "explain that this slogan is absolutely false and meaningless without the revolutionary overthrow of the German, the Austrian and the Russian monarchies".²

Lenin, therefore, saw the USE as an immediate objective, a minimum programme, as it were, tailored to a single bourgeois-democratic revolutionary demand (to oust the monarchist regimes). Shortly thereafter, however, the Bolsheviks dropped the slogan since it stipulated joined international action as the only means of attaining even such a limited general-democratic target. They could not endorse the misconception that individual national revolutions are totally dependent on the international revolutionary scene. Time and again, Lenin returned to this crucial issue in such outstanding in-depth studies as "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe", and "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution".

Lenin defended the USE anti-monarchist proposal against the charge that it eclipsed socialist revolutionary goals: "Political changes of a truly democratic nature, and especially political revolutions, can under no circumstances whatsoever either obscure or weaken the slogan of a socialist revolution."³ Nonetheless, he was decidedly against the USE. Why? Because it neglected economic fundament-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The War and Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 33.

² Ibid.

³ Cf. V. I. Lenin, "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 339.

als for superficial political issues—the democratic European “United States” would retain their capitalist base and hence would inevitably, whatever their political, democratic accomplishments, degenerate into a reactionary stronghold, a tacit European capitalist pact to jointly suppress socialism in Europe and join forces against America and Japan.¹ This was the first reason for renouncing the USE slogan.

The second strikes much deeper: Lenin realised that to back a campaign, even for a United States of the World (not Europe), close to the Communist ideal of free nations united under socialism, “may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible”.² This was the key question at the time; it determined the fighting strength of the revolutionaries, whether they would rely on their own, intra-national forces or wait for the revolution to mature simultaneously in many countries.

Lenin’s conclusion that socialism could first triumph in one country was based on the law of the non-uniformity of economic and political development under imperialism, his own discovery. In 1914, he wrote: “Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone.”³ And in 1916 he expanded his argument: “Socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in all countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois.”⁴

Lenin’s concept of non-uniformity encompasses both multinational and uni-national economic and political development disparities, as well as their effect on the maturation of the objective and subjective conditions for socialist revolution. These endlessly mushrooming contradictions and clashes between antagonistic forces, he proved, were weakening and disintegrating the imperialist front. Without exaggeration, Lenin can be said to have revolutionised the attitude to working-class revolutionary potential in the imperialist era. The proletariat throughout the

¹ Ibid., p. 341.

² Ibid., p. 342.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Idem, “The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 79.

world now had scientific proof that each national anti-bourgeois struggle could and would come to victory; Lenin infused the revolutionary movement with energy and initiative. Just as he predicted, one nation after another has won its own socialist revolution.

Is this, Lenin's formidable contribution to Marxist-Leninist thought and the revolutionary triumphs of the past, valid today? Most certainly, yes. For communist strategists, present-day bourgeois integration groups pose essentially the same problems as that faced in the USE question—how to coordinate the national and the international interests in the revolutionary struggle? Lenin's solution put the working class on the path to socialist victory. Its antithesis, the "wait-for-the-others" tactic, as scientific Marxism-Leninism demonstrated in due course, would have curbed the proletariat's revolutionary initiative and chained its struggle to an international structure objectively dominated by capitalist interests.

Does this imply that revolutionaries simply cannot work through bourgeois international institutions to defend the democratic interests of the proletariat and the working people? By no means. As we have just seen, Lenin's approach to the USE underscored its potential boost-force for the democratic movement. By the same token therefore the struggle to democratise the Common Market deserves our staunch support.

There are objective social limits to what the proletariat can achieve, politically, by working *within* the bourgeois international framework—this, we believe, is an immensely significant point. Suppose the revolutionary left were to gain *political* control over some capitalist conglomerate, would this guarantee their absolute command of the said association? Is it not more reasonable to assume that the bourgeoisie, inasmuch as it still monopolies the *economic* apparatus and production resources, would either make a mockery of this political victory or simply destroy the integration mechanisms which no longer serve its interests? Indeed, for all its amendments, the EEC is to this day a European capitalist pact for joint effort to crush socialism in Europe and withstand the American-Japanese advance.

One more aspect should be considered. The lefts need a power base to raise their status within bourgeois integra-

tion associations. Obviously, it is not to be found within these associations, but rather in the national conditions of individual states. In other words, the political influence each national contingent acquires in its own country determines the lefts' real political strength, be it predominant or appreciable, in multi-state organisations. The battle is won or lost on the national field; each step towards democratising the capitalist world's integration structures counts.

Thus, the Marxist-Leninist thesis that the socialist revolution can first triumph in one or several countries holds true to this day. We have just seen how it operates in a modern context. Of course, the accent no longer falls on the word 'first', since the world began the actual transition from capitalism to socialism decades ago. Modern-day revolutionaries must build on the Bolshevik breakthrough and the achievements wrought by the international socialists to establish a strong new order throughout the world. The point is there is still no internationally-determined schedule for revolution; to this day, the economic and political non-uniformity of capitalist development lends objective priority to the national, as opposed to international, factors in the struggle for socialism.

We have already sketched the basic outline of Lenin's law of non-uniformity. Since many specialists have illustrated its application to contemporary capitalist developments, we shall concentrate on the following aspects.

Anti-communist ideologists often accuse the Marxists-Leninists of forcing the strategy of the world revolutionary movement into an oversimplified global model. They are charged of ignoring the distinctive features of each national struggle. These critics have obviously never paused to consider how Lenin's law of non-uniformity relates to the revolutionary process. Basically, it calls on the national contingents of the world revolutionary movement to develop their own initiative, to master the theory and practice of revolution in their own local context and seize the critical point in the economy-politics divergence to break one more national link in the world capitalist chain. The law of non-uniformity in the revolutionary process reflects objective reality. What is more, it substantiates the principle of independence for every communist party fighting for socialism in the name of all working people.

Yet another controversial issue must be mentioned. It is often said that war is essential to revolutionary victory. According to Maoists and sundry ultra-lefts, the founders of Marxism-Leninism could not envisage revolution without war.¹ The same incorrect approach to the relationship between war and revolution in the past, to Bolshevik theory and practice, underlies yet another concept. Its advocates argue that advances in the peaceful reconstruction of international relations and the problem of furthering détente require fundamental revision of socialist strategy. They claim that stable peace prohibits the socialist transformation of society through force of arms, that this was possible and, indeed, inevitable only in the past, during world wars. Some theorists go so far as to urge revolutionaries to abandon the "revolutionary principles of Leninism".

How should we respond to this line of reasoning? Historically, the Great October Revolution, like the socialist revolutions in some European and Asian countries, did indeed coincide with World Wars I or II. On this basis, bourgeois politicians, sociologists and historians have long claimed that without world wars, socialist revolutions would never have triumphed. Marxists-Leninists do not dismiss the possible connection between war and revolution; they concede that a war-charged international situation may well spark some national revolutionary explosion.

Be that as it may, no Marxist-Leninist has ever seen war as the principal, sole or sufficient cause of revolution. Commenting on one such theory, Lenin wrote: "Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push*, and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was

¹ Recently, the Maoists have climbed down from their ultra-left high horses to collaborate with the imperialist ultra-right and invade Vietnam. The surprising ease of their sudden conversion has prompted a rush revision of the Marxist-Leninist principle that war is rooted in the very nature of imperialism and, in some cases, the far-fetched claim that wars between socialist countries are inescapable. Apart from indulging in unadulterated ideological speculation, these theorists fail to appreciate just how far China's ruling clique has departed from the laws of socialist basis development (it is a well-known fact that capitalist basis development is the prime cause of war). Modern China has betrayed its deep-rooted nationalism and chauvinism.

being 'legitimised'? Such a 'theory' would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to 'pushing' revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions." ¹

Accordingly, the notion that Lenin declared "no revolution without war" is a sheer distortion of the Leninist theory and political practice. Equally false is the claim that Leninism can no longer inspire the communist revolutionary movement, since modern class strategy must incorporate the struggle for world peace and security.

Proponents of the "armed revolution is outdated" theory also mechanically transpose certain features of the current international scene to intra-national, inter-class relations. In effect, they regard the class struggle and inter-state relations as following identical development patterns. Just as nations from opposing social systems negotiate for peaceful resolutions and compromises on their various conflicts, they argue, just as international channels are set up to smooth over their points of contention, classes should let their political struggle take second place to *entente cordiale* within the framework of democratic institutions.

This approach is part and parcel of bourgeois ideology in the era of détente. International stability is seen to depend on maintaining the socio-political *status quo* within the national borders of capitalist countries; peaceful co-existence between states is said to rest upon peaceful co-existence between classes. There is nothing new in these concepts. The bourgeoisie has been using the "class peace" thesis for decades, while reformists energetically put it into practice. In objective terms, to subject the revolutionary socialist struggle to limits arbitrarily inferred from the principles of détente is to cater to the bourgeoisie.

While highly appreciating the improvement and democratisation of international relations, Marxists-Leninists have not forgotten that revolution stems, first and foremost, from the class contradictions inherent to a given nation. To adopt any other viewpoint is to acknowledge, in one way or another, that revolution is an extra-national phenomenon, a process to be "exported" and "imported".

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Strange and Monstrous", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 71-72.

Never have international ties been so strong, never have the external factors affecting the revolutionary movement been ~~so~~ significant. Nonetheless, the general correlation of national to international determinants in the struggle for socialism has, in principle, not changed. It is still governed by the organisation, mass support, energy and initiative of the revolutionary forces generated by the class contradictions mounting within an individual state. Conversely, this should not be taken to denigrate the highly important contribution made by the international forces to each revolutionary victory.

The Power of International Solidarity

We have already noted the dual (positive and negative) impact of the highly internationalised modern capitalist system on the socialist revolutionary struggle. Marxist-Leninist strategy is calculated to take maximum advantage of the positive or pro-revolutionary international factors and diminish or neutralise the negative factors. This is the modern shape and content of what since Marx's day has been called the foreign policy of the working class.¹ Its cornerstone is the struggle for the international solidarity of all working people, for proletarian internationalism in other words.

The current level of the struggle between the opposing social systems, the overall intensification of world ties discussed above and the recent upsurge in the masses' socio-political participation in the class, liberation and democratic movements have raised a host of new foreign policy problems for Marxist-Leninist parties and the revolutionary working class. Let us consider those most in need of the dialectical interaction of the economic and political factors involved.

The first problem may be presented as follows. Since, as was shown above, the national front dominates the revo-

¹ Cf. Karl Marx, "Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 18; cf. also Marx/Engels, *Werke*, 31 Bd., p. 86.

lutionary struggle, national working-class contingents and their communist parties work out their own, independent strategy and tactics. Does this weaken the international ties among the various revolutionary movements? Some say it does, especially the bourgeois and reformist ideologists anxious to prove that the international communist movement must conform to the principles of "pluralism" and "total independence". There are even Communists who advocate "sovereignty" and "boundless freedom". What do these concepts imply?

On the one hand, they "force the open door", for as we have seen, Marxist-Leninist theory and practice not only grants but demands independence for every communist party. On the other hand, ardent defence of boundless "sovereignty" for all parties sometimes leads to their separation and self-isolation. The latter trend often takes the form of urging revolutionaries to pressure their governments to "withdraw" from the system of international economic and political relations and take up a stance "equidistant" from the two class antipodes in the world community. Whatever the subjective intentions behind this argument, we believe it ignores certain objective realities.

Soon after the October victory, Lenin remarked: "World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouped, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries and, on the other, all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities."¹ At that time socialism had just graduated from theory into practice and taken its first steps in a single country. Now that a mighty socialist system has appeared on the world scene, world politics are all the more subject to the global struggle between socialism and capitalism. No national social or political process, no public movement or ideological trend can possibly avoid this internationalised class conflict. This, of course, does not mean that every international event evokes a definite conscious choice between one side or the other. Quite the contrary, as we have just seen, politics abounds in suppo-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Moscow, 1974, p. 146.

sodly neutral positions and formulae on the basic antagonism of our epoch, each attempting to carve out some "special, nationally unique path". The political barometer in certain countries often fluctuates according to such views. But the world political climate is still determined by the struggle between the two social systems.

Should national working-class parties remain aloof from the central global class conflict of our era? For Marxists-Leninists, there is but one choice, that dictated by objective reality. Impartiality is impossible, and to subvert worldwide working-class solidarity is to help the class enemy.

Viewed against today's vast inter-state and inter-party complex, national exclusion is an illusion. In an age of intense social internationalisation, there is no escaping international contacts, cooperation and business ties. The only question is: what is the class essence of such exchanges in each party and state?

When highlighting the all-important principle of proletarian internationalism, Marxists-Leninists point to the objective class nature of every international tie; this demands a clear-cut position on the world system as a whole. William Kashtan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Canada outlines the Canadian Communists viewpoint as follows: "The historic significance of the working people's international solidarity is becoming increasingly obvious in a situation in which the cosmopolitisation of capital is leading to the internationalisation of the class struggle, the effects of capitalism's world crisis are acquiring a global scale and the foreign policy gambles of the governments of different imperialist states carry the threat of a world-wide catastrophe."¹

In practice, of course, any step intended to strengthen or weaken the international solidarity of the working people and the communist parties is a political step. But here politics merely reflect the real international class forces' power balance which in the final analysis represents the interplay of economic interests. This is why Marxists-Leninists stress that no revolutionary working-class party should be swayed by temporary political convenience to violate the principles of proletarian solidarity and thereby play into the hands of the class enemy.

¹ *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 1978, p. 74.

Class, i.e. fundamental economic interests shape the international solidarity of the working people and the revolutionary forces. When it is as often declared that solidarity is built, wholly or predominantly, on common political interests, this point cannot be overemphasised.

The political-unity argument runs as follows. National-revolutionary, liberation, anti-imperialist movements must stand together to face common problems and a common enemy. The international solidarity of the monopoly bourgeoisie calls for an equally solid international democratic coalition; a united front for peace, democracy and national liberation is needed to counter-balance the international alliance of the most aggressive reactionaries, colonialists and imperialists. Consequently, it is the common international enemy who cements the international solidarity of the working class.

Marxism-Leninism has no quarrel with this approach *per se*; it simply does not go far enough. Speaking on the objective roots of the worker's internationalism, Lenin noted first that "his economic position (*le salariat*) is not national but international" and secondly that "his class enemy is international"¹. This is highly significant, as focusing exclusively on the common enemy and disregarding the essential factor, the common economic position and interests, can, depending on the circumstances, produce partially or totally invalid conclusions.

In the latter category, the author places "new internationalism", the proposal that proletarian unity be replaced by a mixed front to include all social and political groups willing to join forces against imperialism and its most dangerous expansionist acts.

Beyond all doubt, a coalition of such dimensions matches the democratic aspirations of the masses and the political aims of the working people. One such alliance, the worldwide anti-war movement was in fact forged long ago and has greatly improved the international political climate and given the democratic left a stronger voice in individual countries. The main bond in a broad-based international alliance is indeed the common imperialist foe. But how can an anti-imperialist union, or any other socially heteroge-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Letter to Inessa Armand", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, Moscow, 1973, p. 247 (*le salariat*—wage system).

neous front for that matter, hold together? Where does it ultimately stand in a world split by two opposing social systems?

The formation of broad anti-imperialist coalitions in individual capitalist countries was discussed above, where we noted that Marxist-Leninist strategy leaves scope for the inevitable socio-political realignments in such coalitions in the course of developing revolutionary struggle. It was also emphasised that the working class, whose fundamental economic interests make it the only consistent revolutionary force, is the only class objectively fit to lead the attack on the common enemy, the ruling monopoly groups. We may now extend this postulate to the international struggle. Thus, working-class hegemony is felt equally on the many and diverse national fronts; what is more, it is the ground and source of world-wide anti-imperialist solidarity.

Consider the peace movement. It incorporates every class and social stratum in modern society, including even the big bourgeoisie and the feudals. United by the common threat of world war, the movement is nonetheless shaken when called upon to acknowledge that imperialist is its adversary. More serious still is its failure to recognise that an all-out attack on the aggressive policy of imperialism must strike at the economic roots, or the social basis of expansion and militarism characteristic of the monopoly-dominated capitalist society. Which of the classes taking part is capable of making the anti-war movement so consistent? Which enjoys the material support of the socialist community? Which can offer the front something more substantial than rosy pacifist ideals? Clearly, only one class fits the bill—the class motivated by economic as well as political interests, which is to say, the working class.

Of late, Communists have considerably extended their regional ties. Guided by class principles, they promote the economic and political goals more or less shared by all states in a given region. Unfortunately, certain "new internationalist" concepts have infiltrated the cooperation movement. Above all, we object to the tendency to divorce regional solidarity from international proletarian solidarity or even oppose the two. This panders to the anti-communists by undermining the international communist movement. "New internationalism", it seems, has prompted certain international working-class movement's activists to announce

that they prefer dealing with the socialists, social-democrats and other left-wing parties currently more influential than the Communists. Granted, it is only natural to seek regional or even international alliances with socialists, progressives and freedom fighters since the latter outnumber the Communists and their supporters. But there are definite limits to such unions—sooner or later they run into political and economic issues demanding policy revision of the reformists who, as their record bears out, are highly unlikely to do so. Only the Communists stand by their class economic and political objectives to the end. It is because they so often battle against such overwhelming odds that these steadfast class champions lack, as yet, sufficient influence among the masses. The above-mentioned activists who disdain their cooperation are, therefore, arrogant and unjust. Mutual support, friendly, equitable and close contacts among all allied parties have always been a Communist tradition.

"New internationalism" was intended to replace proletarian internationalism, to expand and make the movement more effective. Instead it stands to shake, if not shatter, the world-wide anti-imperialist front. For Marxists-Leninists, therefore, proletarian internationalism is not a political dogma, but a precept grounded in the scientific analysis of its economic base and leading role among the liberation, democratic, anti-imperialist forces. As Alvaro Cunhal writes: "Proletarian internationalism, the mutual support and reciprocal solidarity of the working people of all countries, is based on the irreconcilable antagonisms of interests between the working class and the bourgeoisie of the country concerned, and the community of interests and goals of the working people of all countries. Hence, the working people's unity and solidarity, which find revolutionary expression in the unity of the world communist movement, are the main, decisive force of anti-imperialist solidarity and unity, as well as of the system of alliances with other social and political forces."¹

As indicated above, when the world split into two social camps and the international socialist economic community was born, the revolutionary, liberation movements found new forms of proletarian internationalist cooperation. Eco-

¹ *World Marxist Review*, No. 12, December 1977, p. 21.

conomic solidarity has enriched the proletarian revolutionary political strategy elaborated by Marx and Engels for the Working Men's International Association.

Significantly, the revolutionary movement has benefited from certain shifts in the world power balance. In general political terms, the mere presence of the Soviet Union and other socialist states, as well as their foreign policy, has produced a lasting positive effect on the international situation, which to a large extent owes its impact to their firm and steadily expanding economic base.

On the other hand, the emergence of a socialist sector in the world economy has enabled the revolutionary movement to use direct economic ties of an entirely new class content in its struggle. Two basic trends are observed: (1) the socialist economy supplies the technological equipment and material resources essential to the modern-day revolutionary struggle facing the well-armed, economically-strong imperialists, reactionaries and exploiting classes; and (2) it can qualitatively restructure various countries' foreign economic ties, modify or mitigate their overdependence on the capitalist market and production complex of the multinational monopolies.

Marxist-Leninist parties pay due heed to these positive changes in the international background of the present-day revolutionary struggle and stress the need for greater consolidation and cooperation within the world socialist community. Fidel Castro explains the practical sense and essence of the Communists' standpoint: "Without the resolute, firm and generous help of the Soviet people our country could not have survived the confrontation with imperialism. They bought our sugar when our market was brutally cut off by the United States; they provided us with raw materials and fuel that we would have been unable to purchase anywhere else; they gave us, free of charge, the weapons with which we fought the mercenaries at Girón and equipped our Revolutionary Armed Forces so as to make any direct aggression from the United States as costly as possible; they gave extraordinary support to our economy in the critical years of the economic blockade The Soviet people's effort was followed by other socialist countries to the extent of their possibilities."¹ From a wealth of his-

¹ *First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, pp. 58-59.

torical evidence, Castro concludes: "Our confidence in Lenin's Homeland is unbounded, because in the course of more than half a century the Soviet revolution has proved its adherence to the principles and consistent line of behaviour in its international policy. It has shown this not only in Cuba, but also in Vietnam, in the Middle East, in the Portuguese colonies fighting for their independence, in Chile, Cyprus, Yemen, Angola and every other part of the world where the national liberation movement confronts colonialism and imperialism, as it once did in an exemplary manner with the heroic Spanish people. This incontestable truth has not been invalidated by a single exception and in the long run any slanderous attempt to deny history's objective facts will be useless."¹

We could cite many other prominent figures in the communist and workers' parties, as well as the liberation movement, all of whom concur with Castro.

Clearly, it is one thing to anticipate direct economic assistance from the socialist bloc and quite another to rely upon it entirely. Marxist-Leninist parties realise there is a limit to the resources the socialist economy can set aside for the revolutionary and liberation movements. All too often, political factors restrict the volume and type of goods shipped. Still, as we have seen, the socialist states can offer another form of cooperation to newly-liberated nations and revolutionaries struggling in the capitalist countries, by encouraging them to strive to diversify their economies' foreign ties and raise the relative volume of economic cooperation with the socialist community. The economic programmes and demands advanced by the Communists in the capitalist countries (Portugal and Denmark, for instance)² place more and more emphasis on this very point. As the Finnish Communists put it: "The official bodies and enterprises responsible for foreign trade must keep up their efforts to expand trade with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Without trade and economic cooperation, particularly with the Soviet Union, Finland would fa-

¹ Ibid., pp. 59-60.

² A. Cunhal, *A Revolução Portuguesa. O Passado e o Futuro*, p. 290; XXV съезд Коммунистической партии Дании, Копенгаген, 23-26 сентября 1976 г. (Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Denmark, Copenhagen, 23-26 September, 1976), p. 129.

ce economic problems much more serious than its present straits." ¹

The Latin American Communists are equally concerned with diversifying foreign trade; their programmes and policy documents demand that the imbalanced orientation towards the US and West European markets be offset by stronger economic and trade ties with the USSR and the socialist countries. ²

The economy, then, plays an immense role in consolidating the working people throughout the world. Without grasping this impact in all its many aspects, it is impossible to understand the essence of proletarian internationalism. But in order to take complete advantage of its objective potential all sides concerned must be consistent in their proletarian policies. This is why Marxist-Leninist strategists attach such importance to strengthening internationalist ties and cooperation.

Communist and workers' parties from the socialist community steadfastly uphold this position. L. I. Brezhnev commented at the Twenty-Fifth CPSU Congress: "We should like to lay special emphasis on the importance of proletarian internationalism in our time. It is one of the main principles of Marxism-Leninism.... To renounce proletarian internationalism is to deprive communist parties and the working-class movement in general of a mighty and tested weapon. It would work in favour of the class enemy, who, by the way, actively coordinates its anti-communist activities on an international scale. We Soviet Communists consider defence of proletarian internationalism the sacred duty of every Marxist-Leninist." ³

¹ "SKP:n Keskuskomitea: Taistelua demokraattisen vaihtoehdon puolesta voimistettava", *Kansan Uutiset*, Joulukuun, 18. päivä 1977.

² Cf. *Programa del Partido Comunista de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1969), p. 52; *Programa del Partido Comunista de Colombia: Por la Unidad Popular para el Futuro de Colombia*, Editorial Colombia Nueva Ltda., Bogota, 1976, p. 112; *XII Congreso. Partido Vanguardia Popular de Costa Rica*, San José, 1976, p. 69; *Programa del Partido Comunista de Honduras. III Congreso, 1977, Tegucigalpa*, 1977, p. 18; *Planteamientos del Partido Comunista Peruano sobre el Plan 'Tupac Amaru'—Lo que planteó el PCP al Presidente Morales Bermudez*, Lima, 1977, p. 51; *Partido Comunista Mexicano. Declaración de Acción. Estatutos*, Mexico City, 1978, p. 26.

³ *Documents and Resolutions: XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1976, p. 37.

Marxist-Leninist parties from the non-socialist world regard proletarian internationalism as a vital strategic guideline with which to build their political struggle on the bedrock solidarity of the world proletariat, particularly the state-organised working class.

Bonds of unity, will prevail over points of contention in the international working-class movement for the lofty goals of social progress—of this the Marxist-Leninists are convinced. Capital, they realise, is an international force and in order "to vanquish it, an international workers' alliance, an international workers' brotherhood is needed".¹ A progressive front headed by the working class is the only force strong enough to topple capitalism and carry the socialist order to all ends of the earth. There is no other way.

AFTERWORD

Nowadays the world revolutionary process is extremely rich in forms and means. A broad cross-section of the international community is involved in the political movement leading the world from capitalism to socialism. This is one of the hallmarks of the twentieth century. As we approach the twenty-first, with society's production forces and institutions evolving more rapidly than ever before, we can look forward with confidence to a broader social base for the socialist struggle, new allies for the working-class front. How should the analyst revise his concepts of revolution, particularly the economy-politics dialectic, to encompass these new perspectives? Lenin had the best answer: "He who realises how enormously the modern working-class movement has grown and branched out will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to carry out this task."¹

Far from being all-embracing, this book has concentrated on the major national and international issues involved in the revolutionary socialist transformation of society. These issues, which in the final analysis determine the laws and goals of revolution, are capsulised in the chapter titles "Property", "Power", "Democracy" and "Internationalism", the key battle areas for the opposing class forces once revolutionary transformation is begun. They are quite rightly the focal point in the contemporary debate on the social and political future of the world.

We have seen how much attention the international communist movement pays to these problems. And it is quite evident that Marxists-Leninists will continue, as always, to study them in depth, pooling their scientific talent to find practical, topical solutions. Parties which have led victorious socialist revolutions contribute their invaluable experience, a reliable guide for all students of revolution.

Marxist-Leninists thoroughly appreciate the great strides in theory and practice made by the CPSU, the party of Lenin and the Great October Revolution. Lenin's works, publications issued by the Soviet Communists, articles and books by L. I. Brezhnev and other CPSU leaders are most intensively studied. So great is the interest aroused by So-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 370.

viet scholarly works on the theory and practice of revolution that the author feels a special sense of responsibility. It must therefore be repeated that the present work does not pretend to have solved, once and for all, so complex and multi-faceted a problem as the interaction between economy and politics in revolution. The field is wide open to further research. Life and revolution are forever forging ahead to provide the scholar with fresh inspiration and material.

Essentially, the scientific theory of communism advances by generalising revolutionary, social practice. As the latter branches out, the revolutionaries now fighting for common class, democratic or anti-imperialist goals will inevitably develop somewhat different viewpoints. And this is only natural. Creative diversity never has and never will signify a crisis in the ideology and politics of the working class. Quite the reverse, it testifies to the inexhaustible, never-stagnant vitality of revolutionary theory. On this basis, Marxists-Leninists reach the two conclusions used as guidelines in this book. First, creative, realistic revolutionary thought demands the tireless pursuit of theoretical and political solutions for a rapidly changing world. It cannot tolerate dogmatic rigidity. Secondly, the only fruitful approach to the modern features of the revolutionary struggle is the analysis based on the solid theory and methodology to be found in Marxism-Leninism.

Bourgeois and reformist ideologists have long been playing up the apparent discrepancy between these two conclusions; ideological creativity excludes dogmatic fidelity to Marx, Engels and Lenin, they claim. Are there any grounds for this argument? None whatsoever, as the author hopes the present work has proved.

In point of fact, the economy-politics interaction is closely linked to the dialectics of the subjective and the objective. We have stressed throughout this book that the political sphere affords tremendous scope for the creative approach to revolution, that the search for concrete solutions is not to be bound by any textbook dogma. We have also demonstrated, using historical material where available, that revolutionary politics, is always bound to the laws of the class struggle; free from dogma as it may be, it is subject to the objective demands of economic reality, above all, the irresolvable economic contradiction between labour and capital.

These objective laws are elementary Marxist-Leninist tenets. To claim that they shackle revolutionary political crea-

tivity is quite simply to reduce Communists' politics and the workers' and working-people's struggle from a realistic strategy into Utopian wishful thinking.

Communist theory then is not limited, but invigorated by following the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. We touched upon the indissoluble interrelationship between these two principles, the creative and the objective approach to Leninist political strategy, in Chapter One, when discussing the laws and ideals of socialist revolution. It was our aim to show that despite the many new factors affecting the present revolutionary struggle, the basic laws discovered by Marx, Engels and Lenin hold true to this day. Seen in this light, the world revolution past and present is an indivisible whole and as such demands ideological and theoretical continuity.

The world has come a long way, socially, politically and ideologically, since Marx and Engels first raised socialism from a Utopian ideal to a science. Society, they proved, develops in step with its prevailing production and economic relations. Much has changed since Lenin revealed, in theory and practice, the amazing potential working-class revolutionary politics acquires when, liberated from the confines of false economic determinism, it follows the objective laws of socio-economic development and gives full rein to its creative energy. The world is constantly moving on, but however much its social and economic parameters may change, the precepts set forth in the militant materialism and revolutionary dialectics of Marxism-Leninism are eternal truths.

Among these unfading tenets are:

- there is no socialism without public ownership of the means of production;

- there is no socialism without a state dedicated to the class, or basic economic, interests of the proletariat and all working people;

- there is no socialism when these interests do not dictate the form and content of democracy;

- there is no socialism when its basic economic and class features are sacrificed to "national integrity", genuine or fictitious as the case may be.

The author hopes that this book has done more than reiterate these time-tested truths, that it has proven their invulnerability to today's "fashionable" brand of anti-communist criticism.